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Radicalism, Rational Dissent, and Reform: The Platonised Interpretation of Psychological Androgyny and the Unsexed Mind in England in the Romantic Era.

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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny that emerged on the radical margins of Rational Dissent in England between the 1790s and the 1840s. A legacy largely of the socio-political and religious impediments experienced by Rational Dissenters in particular and an offshoot of natural rights theorising, belief in the unsexed mind at this time appears more prevalent amongst radicals in England than elsewhere in Britain. Studied largely by scholars of Romanticism as an aesthetic concept associated with male Romantics, the influence of the unsexed mind as a notion of psycho-sexual equality in English radical discourse remains largely neglected in the historiography. Far from a misogynistic concept concerned with male power and the appropriation of the feminine, closer analysis of the broader socio-political ideas not only of Romantic poets but of non-Romantic associates - journalists, physicians, educationalists, ministers and scientists - reveals a more egalitarian ethos, inspired by a revival of ideas from a resurgent Platonism and in particular by Plato's dialogue on love and friendship, the *Symposium*. A revolution of the human mind was sought through critical reforms to the two great and largely private bastions of patriarchal control, education and marriage. Focusing on androgyny reveals a largely overlooked form of heterodox radicalism on the margins of Rational Dissent, supportive of psycho-sexual equality and distinct and increasingly isolated from more conventional forms of radicalism, concerned largely with public issues of religious freedom, parliamentary reform and universal (male) suffrage. Revealed also, is the important, yet subtle, distinction between a Platonised and egalitarian interpretation of androgyny, influenced by German-led advances in biblical exegesis as well as the natural and human sciences, and a more patriarchal Judeo-Christian and Neoplatonic interpretation of the androgynous union of sexual opposites, enshrined in the conservative doctrine of separate spheres and endorsed increasingly from the 1830s onwards by the generality of society.

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Introduction

In 1818 the Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelly (1792-1822), wrote in the preface to his unpublished translation of Plato's *Symposium* that the 'invidious distinction of human kind, as a class of beings [of] intellectual nature, into two sexes, is a remnant of savage barbarism which we have less excuse than they for not having totally abolished.'[1] Aristophanes' famous tale of divided humans, pining for their other halves, had a profound effect on radical imaginations in England during the Romantic era, acting for some as an allegory for the troubled and divided times in which they lived and as evidence of the androgynous origins of humankind. All but overlooked in British historiography, this thesis examines the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny or the unsexed mind that emerged and developed amongst radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent in England between the 1790s and the 1840s.

In place of the emerging and ever stricter binary 'two-sex' model of human sexuality,[2] the concept of the unsexed mind or what we might term in retrospect, psychological androgyny, supported the notion that, regardless of biological sex, the human mind in its natural or perfected state was fluid and unsexed. Writing in 1793, the Unitarian physician and writer John Aikin (1747-1822) confessed to being of the opinion 'of those who would rather form the two sexes to resemblance of character, than contrast them. Virtue, wisdom, preference of mind, patience, vigour, capacity, application, are not sexual qualities: they belong to mankind…'[3] 'Human beings', the Romantic poet and one-time Unitarian, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) argued, were 'differenced from each other by degrees only, and these

[1] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Plato's Banquet Translated from the Greek, A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love, also a Preface to the Banquet, Revised and Enlarged by Roger Ingpen*, (London, Curwen Press, 1931), pp.16-17.
[2] See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.149-192.
[3] John Aikin, *Letters from a Father to his Son* (London, J. Johnson, 1793), p.341.

degrees too often-times changing.'[4] Concern lay with protecting what the Unitarian minister, William Johnson Fox (1786-1864) described as an 'infinitely varied humanity',[5] and what the philosopher and novelist William Godwin (1756-1836) before him described as the 'endless variety of mind',[6] where one's rights, movements and aspirations were not determined by the limitations of biology. Writing to his friend, the author and historian, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) in 1833, the philosopher, economist and advocate of women's rights, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) queried whether there was 'really any distinction between the highest masculine & the highest feminine character?':

> I do not mean the mechanical acquirements; those, of course, will very commonly be different. But the women, of all I have known, who possessed the highest measure of what are considered feminine qualities, have combined with them more of the highest masculine qualities than I have ever seen in any but one or two men, & those one or two men were also in many respects almost women. I suspect it is the second-rate people of the two sexes that are unlike—the first-rate are alike in both—[7]

Psycho-sexual difference was on the whole, they argued, an arbitrary social construct. For society to progress and to develop, the fluid nature of *human* psychology - irrespective of biological sex - had to be acknowledged and nurtured, and most notably through improvements to education and significant reforms to the private and domestic sphere from which public virtues would grow. The 'first laudable ambition,' wrote the radical advocate of

[4] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'No. 9, Thursday, October 12, 1809, Essay VI,', *The Friend: A Literary, Moral, and Political Weekly Paper* (London, 1809-1810), p.139.
[5] William Johnson Fox, 'On National Education, Lecture I', *Finsbury Lectures: Reports of lectures delivered at the chapel in South Place, Finsbury* (London, 1840), pp.15-16.
[6] William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), ed. by Mark Philp (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p.443.
[7] John Stuart Mill, 'Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 5 October, 1833', *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, 1806-1873* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), 'is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex'.[8]

From the 1790s, fears and insecurities across England occasioned by industrial growth, revolution in France, war and the all-pervading threat of invasion were leading it seemed to ever more reactionary and conservative notions of sexual character in a bid to maintain order and stability. Far from being a product of the late twentieth-century, gender as a category of analysis can be seen emerging as a topic of increasingly heated debate from the 1790s.[9] Notions of gender and sex-appropriate-identities came under ever greater scrutiny as an increasingly evangelical and conservative establishment attempted to rebut the advances of Jacobinism and its levelling ideology. Opinions which had existed largely implicitly before the French Revolution became increasingly explicit, voiced in religious sermons and written into newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, advice manuals and text books. The most famous of these and arguably a catalyst for what would become an increasingly contentious debate on the existence of sexual difference, was *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* written by the politician Edmund Burke (c.1729-1797), and published in 1790. Burke wrote *Reflections* in reaction to a sermon given before the English Revolution Society in 1789 by the radical Unitarian minister and philosopher, Richard Price (1723-1791). In his *Discourse on the Love of our Country*, Price spoke of the need to continue the advance of Britain's liberties.[10] Although Price did not refer directly to the rights of women, and the copy of the French *Declaration of Rights* added in an appendix spoke only of the rights of 'men' and of 'man', references to citizenship and natural rights augured a future in which men and women might

[8] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', in Janet Todd (ed.), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and a Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), p.73. All references to 'Rights of Woman' are taken from this edition.
[9] For discussion on 'gender studies' as an 'analytic category' in the late twentieth century, see Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review* 19, no.5 (1986), pp.1053-1075.
[10] Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country, Delivered on Nov. 4, 1789* (London, George Stafford, 1790).

one day be social and political equals. In response, Burke warned of the enervating disintegration of rank and sex that would come to part should Jacobins such as Price succeed in their desires.[11] Men and women, Burke argued, were complementary opposites, with distinct and separate characters and thus distinct and separate spheres of responsibility. Evidence of this was enshrined in the Bible; in the sacred and indissoluble vow of matrimony and in the androgynous yet patriarchal concept of 'one flesh' which reunited these sexual opposites in physical and spiritual harmony. To blur such natural distinctions through mistaken notions of equality would be to subvert God's law and to dilute and weaken the sexual and moral character of society and of the nation.

Burke's *Reflections* elicited a fierce response. A volley of political pamphlets and tracts shot from the printing presses, amongst them Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1790) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of The Rights of Men* (1790). Concerned on the surface with supporting Price and his defence of British liberties, underpinning these attacks was a new and increasingly radical interrogation of what it was to be human. Emerging in England from the 1790s, the surprisingly neglected concept of psychological androgyny in English history was an offshoot of earlier and contemporary natural rights theorising but with at times subtle, yet quite significant, deviations. At the heart of this radical concept lay the belief that the human mind was unsexed and as such should be reflected in the rights, structures and practices of civilised society.

Essentially, this is a study of an English rather than a British, concept. The issues that encouraged the particular interpretation of androgyny that developed amongst English radicals between the 1790s and the 1840s arose in large part out of the peculiar socio-religious and political impediments experienced by them as religious and intellectual non-

[11] Edmund Burke, 'Reflections on the Revolution in France', in *Reflections on the French Revolution & Other Essays* (London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1935), p.73. Burke's publication resulted in an outpouring of radical condemnation.

conformists who dissented not only from Anglican but increasingly Dissenting orthodoxies. This might help to explain the relative absence of the concept in the historiography of the period.

Androgyny and Present-Day Scholarship

Though surprisingly overlooked by historians of English social, political and even gender studies, the topic of androgyny is by no means neglected. Type 'androgyny' into the online catalogue at the British Library and a host of books, journal articles and theses are revealed, dating from the 1960s right through to 2017. Browse the contents of these varying books, articles and theses and you will soon discover that androgyny has excited interest and controversy in equal measure across millennia, continents and cultures. It has not been the sole concern of one era or one continent, nor has it been confined to one set of beliefs or one ideology but has influenced individuals and belief systems throughout history. For millennia the concept of androgyny has featured in the works of philosophers, playwrights, poets, theologians and mystics. References to primordial wholeness appear in the Bible, the ancient Kabbalah, Gnosticism and Hermeticism. It was present in the metaphysical foundations of the science of alchemy.[12]

Today, androgyny features regularly in the studies of anthropologists, sociologists and psychoanalysts, focusing upon the psychological as well as the physiological aspects of androgyny, and as David F. Greenberg and Gilbert Herdt illustrate, its historic associations with homosexuality.[13] As a topic of sustained controversy, however, it has attracted perhaps the greatest share of attention from literary and art scholars of Romanticism, so much so, that for some, androgyny has become all but synonymous with the Romantic movement, and it is

[12] M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), pp.154-158.

[13] See Ellen Piel Cook, *Psychological Androgyny* (New York, Pergamon Press, 1985); R.W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000); David. F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1990); Gilbert Herdt (ed.), *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (New York, Zone Books, 1996).

easy to see why. References to androgyny pepper the works of Romantics such as Coleridge and Shelley in England, Friedrich Schlegel in Germany and Honoré de Balzac in France.[14] While this thesis does not seek to challenge the timing of the concept as something that emerged in the Romantic era, it does, however, endeavour to confront the seeming assumption that it was a product essentially of Romanticism and of a male and masculinist Romanticism in particular. It is this assumption, however, which has led, arguably, to the largely negative reception of this 'Romantic' concept in present-day literary scholarship and perhaps to its relative neglect by historians of the period.

Amongst literary and largely female scholars of Romanticism of the late twentieth century, from the 1970s through to the 1990s, 'Romantic' androgyny is portrayed in a largely negative light, described as a misogynistic concept masquerading as an egalitarian one.[15] For such scholars, the androgynous notion of union, although based supposedly on the equality of the sexes, presupposes, nonetheless, the dominance of the male. 'Romantic' androgyny is not a story of sexual equality but an example of the persistence of sexual difference and division. Notable amongst these literary critics are Dianne Long Hoeveler and Anne K. Mellor. Both focus on the feminine challenge to reassert independence in the face of an aggressive and appropriating masculine 'other'. 'A large proportion of "women" in the poetry of major Romantics', Hoeveler asserts, 'cannot be understood apart from this radical metaphoric tradition of literary absorption/cannibalization'.[16] Similarly, Mellor in her introduction to *Romanticism and Feminism* describes Romantic androgyny as the 'dual strategy of deifying

[14] For studies of androgyny in French and German culture see Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and the Metaphysics of Love* (New York, Peter Lang, 1983); Naomi J. Andrews, 'Utopian Androgyny: Romantic Socialists Confront Individualism in July Monarchy France', *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (Summer, 2003), pp.437-457; Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1998); Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1992).
[15] For a detailed examination of androgyny in Romantic and later literature and one that also provides analysis of twentieth-century feminist critiques, see Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, pp.145-169. Weil's final chapter on androgyny and its 'appropriation' for feminist purposes is particularly interesting.
[16] Dianne Long Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny: The Women Within* (University Park and London, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), p.xiv.

the male ego even as it cannibalized the attributes of the female'.[17] Words such as 'cannibalise', 'engulf', 'silence' and 'appropriate' arise time and again and are used to describe a concept that, while encouraging the appropriation of the feminine as a necessary element in male creative genius, ignored or suppressed its female equivalent.[18] What these and similar studies of the time have in common, however, is that they are all influenced by late twentieth-century American feminist theory or 'gynocriticism' as the American literary critic and feminist Elaine Showalter christened it.[19] Feminist theory of the 1970s posited that the '"real" subject of male discourse [was] the relation between men or between man and himself'.[20] The androgyny described by Romantic poets such as Coleridge was concerned with male rather than female self-fulfilment and elements of Coleridge's poetry and prose do at times suggest this. And yet, to describe the presence of androgyny in male Romantic literature as misogynistic is I wish to argue, misleading. Though we cannot ignore those incidents when expressions of support for psycho-sexual equality amongst Romantic poets such as Shelley ran up against real examples,[21] resulting in some noted ambivalence and disquietude, these are elements of a larger and far less 'Romantic' picture. I wish to give some thought, therefore, as to why the 'Romantic' concept of androgyny was so criticised by feminist scholars of the late twentieth century.

[17] Anne K. Mellor (ed.), *Romanticism and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1988), p.7.
[18] See Mellor (ed.), *Romanticism and Feminism*, p.7; Alan Richardson, 'Romanticism and the Colonization of the Feminine', in Mellor (ed.) *Romanticism and Feminism*, p.19; Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny*, p.xiv; Sara Friedrichsmeyer, 'The Subversive Androgyne', *Women in German Yearbook* 3 (1987), pp.63-75; Lisa Rado, *The Modern Androgyne Imagination: A Failed Sublime* (Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 2000); Jennifer Wallace, *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism* (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p.137.
[19] See Mellor (ed.), *Romanticism and Feminism*, p.4.
[20] Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny*, p.3.
[21] See Shelley's relationship with Elizabeth Hitchener relayed in Nathaniel Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1979), pp.171-172.

Androgyny and Feminism

In her critically acclaimed work, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, first published in 1964, Carolyn Heilbrun, an American feminist and literary scholar, hailed androgyny as a remedy to the psycho-sexual inequality and segregation of the times. As a pioneering second-wave feminist concerned with broadening the rights and opportunities of women, for Heilbrun, androgyny had the potential to 'liberate the individual from the confines of the appropriate'.[22] For men and women, androgyny offered 'a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes [suggesting]…a full range of experience open to individuals who may, as women, be aggressive, as men, tender; it suggests a spectrum upon which human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom.'[23] Heilbrun's interest in exploring androgyny stemmed from her belief that the western world at the time was profoundly anti-androgynous. It was wedded to ideals of sexual difference constructed largely in the Victorian era and ones that she argued 'forced men and women into roles so distinct and confining that we have not only restricted their development, but have also robbed the world of the many new possibilities inherent in a meeting of these extremes.'[24] As a professor of English at Columbia University, Heilbrun recognised the importance of the concept of androgyny in the Romantic era and the majority of the figures chosen by her to represent the androgynous spirit were novelists and poets from the Romantic era or who were known to have been influential upon or influenced by them. Yet despite initial interest, Heilbrun's call for androgynous liberation and her positive accounts of 'Romantic' androgyny were met with increasing scepticism and especially amongst fellow American feminists and literary critics from the 1970s. As Kari Weil points out, criticism of the 'Romantic' concept emerged overwhelmingly from within

[22] Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), p.x.
[23] Carolyn G. Heilbrun, 'Further notes toward a recognition of androgyny', *Women's Studies* 2 (1964), pp.143-144.
[24] Ibid., p.144.

the American academic institution and has since provided some of its most vociferous critics.[25]

In 1974, ten years after Heilbrun's work on androgyny first appeared, the feminist journal, *Women's Studies* published a series of essays in response. While 'stirred' by the vision of androgyny envisioned by Heilbrun and by the feminist philosopher Mary Daly,[26] the feminist and literary scholar, Barbara Gelpi, writing on the 'Politics of Androgyny', warned of the less than utopian effects of the concept in 'earlier history' and of its misuse and abuse 'time and again', pointing to the unilateral nature of the male-centric concept.[27] It was an opinion shared by the feminist, Daniel Harris who in the same edition, wrote that the 'myth of androgyny has no positive value'. It is impossible to discuss, he argued, without resorting to sexist polarisations and, as a 'microcosm of heterosexual power relations within the dominant culture, can only perpetuate the habits of oppression we seek to reject'.[28] The feminist and literary scholar Cynthia Secor described androgyny 'as a term used in our patriarchal culture [that] conjures up images of the feminized male…and of the perfect marriage in which the female has been acquired by the male in order to complete himself…In effect *gynandry* does not exist.'[29] For Secor, as for others, another problem with the image of the androgyne was that, at a time of heightened feminist activism in the 1970s, an image that melded male and female together not only risked undermining the discussion on women's rights but was simply too ambiguous to offer any clear sense of collective political identity. As Secor

[25] For a detailed study of American feminist history see Janet Todd, *Feminist Literary History: A Defence* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007). More recently, British scholars of Romanticism such as Tim Fulford, Nicholas Roe and Sharon Ruston have done much to raise awareness of the often overlooked socio-political aspects of the movement in England and to problematize earlier feminist critiques. See Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey and Hazlitt* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999)*;* Nicholas Roe (ed.), *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005); Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[26] See Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1973), pp.158-159.
[27] Barbara Gelpi, 'The Politics of Androgyny', *Women's Studies* 2 (1974), pp.151-160.
[28] D.A. Harris, 'Androgyny: The sexist myth in disguise', *Women's Studies* 2 (1974), pp.171-172.
[29] Cynthia Secor, 'Androgyny: An early reappraisal', *Women's Studies* 2 (1974), p.166.

argued, 'an Amazon, or a witch, is a woman, a member of a group like herself, who in addition to private identities have collective power in the public realm.'[30] As we will see, similar concerns with identity awaited supporters of the concept towards the end of the Romantic era.

As Lisa Rado rightly observes, studies of androgyny in the past tend to turn upon a late-twentieth-century feminist definition of androgyny, which does not tend to consider the 'cultural moment' in which the concept emerged and was used.[31] 'Since the personal is the political', writes Mellor, 'a discussion of the private female experiences articulated in literary texts often produces in the reading critic a sense of shared injustice that must be rectified.'[32] The theoretical framework used to study androgyny in the Romantic era is, on the whole, anachronistic, viewed by scholars with knowledge not only of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century theories of sexuality and gender - Freudian, Lacanian, Feminist - but with political objectives of their own and with knowledge of the apparent defects of the concept in history. Warnings of the 'dangers of projecting current formulations retrospectively,' are, as Laura Doan points out, well known. Yet, prior to the late nineteenth century and the development of taxonomies of gender and sex, there is a risk that 'theories' which seek to categorise through the analysis of sexual binaries, distort and simplify more complicated pictures, creating artificial differences and objectives between men and women as uncomplicated homogenous sexed beings or groups.

Similar concerns can be made of modern categories of analysis, such as the term 'feminist' to describe men and women who supported the notion of psycho-sexual equality during the Romantic era. While I agree wholeheartedly with Doan's point that concerns might be raised over the 'relinquishing [of] categories' that we know to be insufficient but which provide an

[30] Ibid., p.163.
[31] Rado, *Modern Androgyne Imagination*, p.139.
[32] Mellor (ed.), *Romanticism and Feminism*, p.5.

important 'semblance of legibility,'[33] there are occasions when terms such as 'feminist' can result in obscuration rather than 'legibility'. In her seminal work on Wollstonecraft, Barbara Taylor highlights the 'problematic' and 'anachronistic' nature of 'feminist', admitting that the term has often led to the misrepresentation of Wollstonecraft's 'religiously inspired utopian radicalism'.[34] How are we to account for the many paradoxical inconsistencies in Wollstonecraft's opinions on women: her castigation of female follies; her desire to 'confound' and to 'forget' sex; her desire for women to become more 'manly'?[35] By giving more space to the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny as a humanist rather than a feminist stance, it is possible to make more sense of the seeming and at times confusing inconsistencies that appear time and again in the works and ideas of these people. It allows us moreover to distinguish between so-called instrumentalists who believed in equal, yet different, intellectual capabilities between the sexes and those who simply saw no such distinction. Yet, as Arianne Chernock rightly notes, as too Heilbrun before her, the former instrumentalist understanding would prove into the Victorian era and beyond 'far more popular' than the latter.[36]

Interestingly, studies of androgyny amongst scholars of German and French Romanticism from the 1980s through to the turn of the twenty-first century appear in many ways more balanced and contextualised, reflecting the fact that in Germany and France Romanticism is treated not only as a literary movement but as a political one also, identified with the rise of nationalism, nation-building and patriotism. Within Anglo-American institutions English Romanticism has until recently been treated quite differently: as a movement that shrank from continental excesses; looking inwards for validation and self-fulfilment within a country

[33] Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago, 2013), pp. 100–101.
[34] Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.12-13.
[35] See Wollstonecraft, *Rights of Woman*, pp.72, 119, 121.
[36] Arianne Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman: Men's Pursuit of Intellectual Equality in the Late British Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies* 45, No. 3 (July 2006), p.523.

that avoided revolution and invasion and which sought to hold back the forces of democratic progression. It is important therefore that we recognise institutional and theoretical differences - distinctions for example between American and French feminist theory – and how these theories have been applied when considering scholarly critiques of androgyny in the Romantic era. Sara Friedrichsmeyer's study of androgyny in early German Romanticism[37] provides an in depth picture of its development from an egalitarian concept of psycho-sexual equality in the mid-1790s to a more conservative symbol of the union of complementary opposites towards the end of that decade.[38] Naomi J. Andrews' study of androgyny in France in the 1830s and 1840s, offers a similar account, although the more conservative bent of Romanticism in France from its inception in the 1820s is reflected in an interpretation of androgyny that was more or less from the beginning based on the union of sexual opposites, illustrated by the Saint-Simonians, as will be discussed.[39]

Focusing on a rather diffuse network of what this thesis will refer to as heterodox radicals in England helps to reveal an interpretation of androgyny extremely similar to that promoted by early German Romantics but quite distinct from later German and French Romantic interpretations, which as Weil argues, with their overtly mystical orientation and influence, became increasingly male-centric and 'hermaphroditic' in their subsuming of the feminine.[40] This is not to suggest, however, that English heterodox radicals were influenced by early German Romantics but that both were influenced by similar Anglo-German and classical sources. Revealed is a form of androgyny distinct in some key aspects also from the traditional biblical ideal that growing numbers of English evangelicals promoted with increasing zeal. Gelpi's description of a Romantic 'androgynous theorising' that was

[37] For appreciation of the three phases of German Romanticism see Frederick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.xi-xviii.
[38] Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne in German Romanticism*
[39] Naomi J. Andrews, 'Utopian Androgyny: Romantic Socialists Confront Individualism in July Monarchy France', *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (Summer, 2003), pp.437-457.
[40] Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, pp.83-84.

essentially masculine and confined within 'the Judaeo-Christian scheme', is more appropriate, it will be argued, for evangelicals such as the writer and philanthropist Hannah More (1745-1833).[41]

This thesis argues that the Platonised interpretation of androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals offered a marked deviation from the male-centric Judaeo-Christian and Neoplatonic interpretation revived initially by evangelicals but endorsed increasingly by the generality of society across England. While Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* and his study of the French eighteenth century hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin uncovers, as Tracy Hargreaves notes, 'the repeated conflation' of the hermaphrodite with androgyny and homosexuality,[42] this thesis seeks to reveal what would appear to have been the conscious elision of the two quite separate classical figures. For opponents of the Platonised concept, the hermaphrodite of Ovidian myth offered an appropriately degraded symbol of the perils of psychosexual indeterminateness, sexual inversion and carnal lust, and a clear antithesis of the Judaeo-Christian notion of androgynous union. It is, however, the points of seemingly superficial convergence between these two interpretations of androgyny – the philosophic and the biblical - that have perhaps led to the heterodox interpretation being obscured in the historiography.

This obscuration is compounded perhaps by scholars such as A.J.L. Busst insisting that the terms 'androgyne' and 'hermaphrodite' are 'exactly synonymous'. Busst refers to the interchangeability of the two terms throughout the nineteenth century. Despite referring to the growth of interest in representations of androgyny during the Romantic era, as will be discussed, Busst believes the conflation of the two terms to have been unproblematic.[43] Yet, conflation of the two terms is problematic. This thesis is not the first to note the conflation of

[41] Gelpi, 'The Politics of Androgyny', p.157.
[42] See Tracy Hargreaves, *Androgyny in Modern Literature* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.18.
[43] A.J.L. Busst, 'The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century', in Ian Fletcher (ed.), *Romantic Mythologies* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), pp.1, 5-6.

the two symbols of sexual dualism. As Robert Kimbrough observed of the feminist discussion of androgyny in 1981, 'much of the recent literature on androgyny has been confused and muddled because of the simple inability to distinguish between the fact that androgyny is a mythic concept which represents an inner, psychic state of experience available to all human beings, whereas hermaphroditism is an objective, physical state of being limited to a few'.[44] Indeed, Catriona MacLeod refers to a persistent 'confusion', from the eighteenth century onwards.[45] It is the causes for this persistent confusion that this thesis wishes to examine as well.

In *Gender and Citizenship,* Claudia Muscovici argues interestingly that androgyny is not 'an intrinsically essentialist and ahistorical trope' but can help to reveal the ways in which 'subject-citizenship…called attention to the historical transition from relational definitions of gender that are asymmetrical (and necessarily privilege one gender at the expense of the other) to those that are symmetrical (and tend to accommodate both male and female subjects on equivalent terms).' [46] Drawing upon French feminist theory, Muscovici uses a 'double' as opposed to a 'single-dialectical process', allowing for male and female to be viewed in partnership as 'both positive and negative terms', which in turn permits the negation of sexual opposites rather than the hermaphroditical subsuming of one within the other. [47] Arguably, it is this 'symmetrical', 'double-dialectical process' that we will see at play in the concept of androgyny interpreted by English heterodox radicals.

The emergence of the concept of androgyny in the Romantic era, both its negative and positive aspects, is linked overwhelmingly to the emergence of early feminism and the women's liberation movement in which men as 'Other' played either negative or supportive

[44] Robert Kimbrough, 'Androgyny, Old and New', *Western Humanities Review* (Fall, 1981), p.201.
[45] MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity*, p.28.
[46] Claudia Muscovici, *Gender and Citizenship: The Dialectics of Subject-Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century French literature and Culture* (New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p.xii.
[47] Ibid., pp.112-115.

roles.[48] Heilbrun acknowledged that if her plea for androgyny in the late 1960s sounded like a 'feminist or "women's lib" cry', then it was because of the power then held by men and the political weakness of women.[49] We are accustomed, Heilbrun argued, to think of history as 'a continuous record of masculine social dominance'.[50] Yet, although the 'masculine' has been in the ascendant for much of human history, it would be wrong, of course, to associate 'masculine' with *all* men or to suggest that there was and is only one 'hegemonic' form of masculinity, as a succession of scholars such as John Tosh and Matthew McCormack have started to reveal.[51] It would be unwise to reject feminist concerns that male Romantics such as Shelley, who allied themselves with the feminine, could not have been fully aware of the real problems faced by women for the very reason that they were, as Teddi Lynn Chichester asserts, part of the 'dominant male world'.[52] Yet, as Tim Fulford notes, 'descriptions [of misogyny and appropriation] oversimplify, coarsening our understanding of historical and literary questions in a period of flux…and they assume that the feminine was constructed from an authoritative and self-consistent masculinity common to the male writers and their male readers'.[53]

In a highly illuminating revisionist study of William Blake (1757-1827), Tom Hayes raises the issue of political correctness in male feminist studies of androgyny from the late twentieth

[48] See June Singer, *Androgyny: the opposites within* (York Beach, Maine, Nicolas-Hays, 2000). First published in 1976.
[49] Heilbrun, *Recognition of Androgyny*, pp.xvi-xvii.
[50] Ibid., p.3.
[51] For studies that interrogate notions of hegemonic masculinity, see John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, vol. 12 (2002), pp.455-472; Matthew McCormack, The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005); Christopher Fletcher, Sean Brady, Rachel E. Moss and Lucy Riall (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (London, Routledge, 1997).
[52] See Teddi Lynn Chichester, 'The Transsexualism of Percy Bysshe Shelley in "Laon and Cythna', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 45 (1996), p.86.
[53] Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity*, p.17.

century. Male critics of Blake's interpretation of androgyny, such as Warren Stevenson,[54] have been too eager, Hayes contends, to show affiliation with the feminist argument and thus to play down signs of genuine belief in the merits of psycho-sexual equality.[55] The same might be said of William Veeder's feminist and somewhat apologetic study of *Mary Shelley & Frankenstein: The Fate of Androgyny* published in 1986. Both Stevenson and Veeder are concerned with the male-oriented and misogynistic tendencies of androgyny in English Romanticism. Far from encouraging unity, the 'Romantic' concept of androgyny, they argue, encouraged division between the sexes. However, even in studies that put forward a positive assessment, such as Nathanial Brown's exploration of sexuality in Shelley,[56] focus remains trained upon the feminist narrative. Despite alluding to the spectre of male qua male prejudice and tyranny, the feminist perspective, paradoxically, subsumes the interests of the male within those of the female. In feminist studies of androgyny, men and women are placed in separate camps according to their sex; the prejudices experienced by men *by* men are dealt with in parenthesis as less diagnostically important than the prejudices experienced by women under men. While not ignoring the at times troubling inconsistencies in the ideas of some 'Romantic' men, studies by Hayes and Marc Kaplan help to reveal a group of radicals whose overarching concern was not for a feminist cause but for the abuses of 'male power…embodied in the structure of society specifically identified…as *patriarchal*.'[57] Concerned with the abuse of power, criticism was aimed by male and female radicals at an 'oppressive masculinist system that [perpetuated] itself through the definition and control of

[54] See Warren Stevenson, *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime Revisited: A new perspective of the English Romantic poets* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010). Stevenson originally published *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime* in 1996.
[55] Tom Hayes, 'William Blake's Androgynous Ego-Ideal', *ELH* 71.1 (Spring, 2004), p.158.
[56] Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley*.
[57] Mark Kaplan, 'Jerusalem and the Origins of Patriarchy', *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 30, no.3 (Winter, 1996/7), p.68.

property.'[58] It was a system prejudiced against all those, women *and* men, who did not conform to arbitrary ideals of heterosexual masculinity.

As Joanna Bourke rightly observes, 'by drawing attention to male oppression of women, [we] ignore the way in which power structures also oppress men.'[59] For Alexandra Shepard, the historian's objective now should be to shift focus from studies that explore either the gendered histories of women or the gendered histories of men to histories that recognise the 'gender differences *within* each sex [as much] as those *between* them.'[60] Of course, I do not wish to suggest that women as a whole were not party to greater prejudices and limitations than men during this period but this must not blind us to the fact that many men, certainly amongst heterodox radicals, as I describe them, were also party to prejudices and penalties and that, prior to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 and political reform in 1832, many inhabited quite similar social and political worlds, and experienced quite similar prejudices, to women. There was a sense of shared indignation amongst male and female radicals at this time and a sense of the loss of talent and opportunity. It was this psycho-sexual and socio-political liminality that radicals – male and female – hoped to remedy through the promotion of the unsexed mind.

Rational Dissent and Radicalism

Interestingly it is within recent studies of Rational Dissent that scholars have started to note the collaborative nature of male/female heterodox radicalism from the 1790s. William McCarthy's illuminating studies of the Unitarian poet and essayist, Anna Barbauld (1743-1825) are prime examples.[61] In 'Cultivating Woman' published in 2006, Chernock notes the

[58] Hayes, 'William Blake's Androgynous Ego-Ideal', p.156.
[59] Bourke, Joanna, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996), p.14.
[60] Alexandra Shephard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), p.2.
[61] William McCarthy, 'How Dissent made Anna Letitia Barbauld, and what she made of Dissent', in Felicity James and Ian Inkster (eds.), *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860* (Cambridge,

largely undocumented 'collaborative' nature of the male/female project for human perfectibility amongst 'nonconformist' radicals in the 1790s.[62] Paying closer attention to the concept and interpretation of psychological androgyny reveals these collaborative efforts to have been aimed at the improvement of both sexes with the belief that improvements to one sex could not be achieved without notable improvements to the other. While female radicals did indeed look to highlight the plight of women and male radicals associated with them looked to support a 'revolution in female manners', what is more often overlooked is the degree to which male and female radicals hoped to encourage a revolution in the manners of *both* sexes leading to the 'perfectibility' of humankind.

But what are the connections between Rational Dissent,[63] heterodox radicalism and the concept of psychological androgyny? Excellent studies on Rational Dissent (or Unitarianism as it became known from the 1770s) have been conducted by Ruth Watts and Kathryn Gleadle, revealing the prominent role played by Unitarians in social and political reform, including the campaigns to abolish slavery and repeal the Test and Corporation Acts and the emerging women's rights movement.[64] According to Watts, a distaste for religious dogma and a toleration of religious and political ambivalence meant that Unitarianism offered, 'an ideal refuge for liberal, independently minded men and women whose religious commitment might be deep but who preferred rational ethics to dogma.'[65] Both scholars, however, note the elements of growing conservatism within the denomination. In her probing study of early feminism and the Unitarians, Gleadle coins the term 'radical unitarians' to distinguish

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Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.52-69; 'Why Anna Letitia Barbauld Refused to Head a Women's College: New Facts, New story', *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 23, no.3 (2001), pp.349-379.

[62] Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman', p.512.

[63] For a detailed discussion on the nature and development of Rational Dissent in Britain see, Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.5

[64] See Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998); Ruth Watts, 'The Unitarian Contribution to Education in England from the Late Eighteenth Century to 1853', (PhD Thesis , Leicester University, 1987); Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760-1860* (London, Longman, 1998).

[65] Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians,* p.4. See also Gleadle, *Early Feminists.*

between ‘Unitarians proper and the offshoot of progressive thinkers’ who gathered around Fox from the late 1820s.[66] Gleadle is concerned with the emerging women’s movement from the 1830s. A reference to the relationship between Fox’s South Place Chapel and *Monthly Repository* group - radicals such as Mary Leman Grimstone; the Flowers sisters, Eliza and Sarah; the Barmbys, John Goodwyn and Catherine; William Linton, and Mill - and ‘an older generation of literati’ such as Godwin and the poet, journalist and literary critic, Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), ‘who provided a direct line to the radicalism of Mary Wollstonecraft’,[67]and of course to Shelley and Coleridge, provide tantalising glimpses of a broader and longer-lived heterodox radical community, stretching back to the radicals who gathered around the radical Unitarian publisher and printer Joseph Johnson (1738-1809) in the 1790s.

As individuals, radicals such as Wollstonecraft and Godwin have been the focus of extensive study; the significance and influence of a broader network of radicals surrounding these individuals and their ideas has not been so closely explored. Where individuals are studied in isolation, they are at risk of assuming the status of exceptionality. The paradox is that their works are at risk of assuming precisely the opposite: of capturing the unproblematic collective ‘spirit of the age’ or *Zeitgeist.* Historiographical oversight of the radicalism on the margins of Rational Dissent might be attributed to the fact that radicalism in England has been studied almost entirely by historians of politics. Until recently, political historians of the eras of revolution and reform, influenced in part by Marxist theory, focused upon issues of working-class politics, suffrage and parliamentary reform. E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* is a famous and influential example. Mark Philp and J.C.D.

[66] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.4-6.
[67] Ibid., p.38.

Clark are unusual in considering the importance of religious controversy within English radicalism.[68] Philp's research on Rational Dissent in the 1790s is particularly illuminating.

For Philp, Rational Dissent not only provided 'a significant portion of the theoretical and intellectual content of radicalism in the 1790s' and the print medium through which that content was communicated, it provided importantly, 'a social substratum for radicalism' from the 1770s through to the 1790s. Yet, as Philp observes, for most historians of radicalism, Rational Dissent was by the 1790s a 'political force on the decline', with the death, retirement and emigration of its 'better known leaders', Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) amongst them, acting as contributing factors.[69] There has been a tendency, Philp argues, for scholars of radicalism to conflate or flatten the distinctions between late eighteenth century Rational Dissent and a far more conservative nineteenth-century Unitarianism.[70] Philp's distinction between a radical Rational Dissent in the 1790s and an increasingly conservative, 'more aggressive, more evangelical' Unitarianism from the early nineteenth century sheds valuable light upon a group of heterodox radicals whose ideas, once in keeping with the Arian-Arminian speculation of eighteenth-century Rational Dissenters, were increasingly at odds with the 'new Unitarianism, biblical, dogmatic, deriving from Priestley (another ex-Independent) and relying heavily on Priestley's necessarian philosophy'.[71] Priestley's philosophy and in particular his thoughts on sexual difference will be discussed in chapter four. This 'new Unitarianism', according to Philp, heralded the 'collapse' of Rational Dissent's former 'rationalism and its perfectibilist assumptions'. Yet, if the 'political wing' of Rational Dissent was in decline, this does not mean, as Philp suggests, that the radicalism

[68] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.488-500.
[69] Mark Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism in the 1790s', *Enlightenment and Dissent* 4 (1985), p.35.
[70] Ibid., pp.35-46.
[71] Ibid., p.42. Necessarianism states that everything has a cause traceable to a first cause or God.

formerly integral to Rational Dissent simply disappeared.[72] While Philp describes the re-directing of radical energies into other organisations and the opening up of radical Rational Dissenting circles to the broader radical community, this thesis observes a strengthening of links with foreign intellectuals; the continuity of ideas of perfectibility enshrined in a revivified Platonism and what Daniel E. White has more recently described as the retreat from the political public sphere to the 'private, interior, and domestic' sphere.[73] But this should not be taken to represent a retreat from radicalism so much as a change of approach. The reorientation towards the private is reflected in a growing concern for the seemingly degraded state of marriage and perhaps more importantly, education. Heterodox radicals who supported the notion that the mind was unsexed were not part of what McCormack describes as the 'Whig reformers and the mainstream radicals'.[74] These people were not unquestioning supporters of universal suffrage. In fact, universal suffrage (male and female), though raised by some, was seldom a priority. For most, education was the main priority. Writing in 1818 of the devastating failures of the French Revolution, Shelley alluded to the ideological naivety of radicals who sought to give ignorance a voice, without first alleviating the causes of that ignorance. Was it possible, Shelley asked, for the uneducated 'trampled slave', to suddenly become 'liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent?'[75] White's insightful examination of early English Romanticism and religious Dissent draws significantly upon Philp's research to provide a closer and more nuanced inspection of radicals such as Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Barbauld and Coleridge in the 1790s.[76] Not only does White, like Philp, observe a lack of sectarian interest within what he calls 'heterodox dissent', he notes also the emergence from the turn of the nineteenth century of more avowedly sectarian interests

[72] Ibid., p.43.
[73] Daniel E. White, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.14.
[74] McCormack, *Independent Man*, p.183.
[75] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Author's Preface', *Revolt of Islam* (London, C & J Ollier, 1818), p.x.
[76] White, *Early Romanticism*, p.90.

beyond this group, visible in the rise of evangelicalism and the growing conservativism of Unitarianism and Trinitarian Dissent.[77] Continuing on from the studies of Philp and White, and using the concept of the unsexed mind as a category of analysis, this thesis examines the broader geographical and temporal connections of this group, beyond the more typical, canonical 'Romantics', to their less 'Romantic' associates – journalists, educationalists, ministers, scientists, physicians - and to the connections beyond the 1790s and the turn of the nineteenth century, through relationships with Owenite socialism and early communism to Fox and his South Place Chapel coterie of the 1830s and 1840s.

The radicalism that grew out of Rational Dissent was not merely an abstract ideology but was, as Philp argues, a 'social phenomenon'. [78] Nor was it, as both Watts and Gleadle attest, built so much upon a set of religious beliefs as upon a set of shared values and experiences.[79] Owing much to the nature and degree of the restrictions placed upon them, Rational Dissenters formed, according to Philp, 'a discursive community locked together by a host of overlapping familial, intellectual, social and emotional ties.'[80] And though dominated by middling sorts, within the major cities and towns, these 'ties' reached beyond the middle to the upper liberal aristocracy and to the lower sections of the skilled artisan classes.[81] Ian McCalman's study of feminism and free love in the 'Zetetic' movement of the radical publisher and writer, Richard Carlile (1790-1843) between 1815 and 1832 reveals the extent to which class distinctions within these heterodox radical communities were blurred.[82] What McCalman's study and that also by Taylor on Owenite socialism serve to highlight, is what we might describe as the fluid, peripatetic nature of heterodox radicalism, with people

[77] Ibid., p.185.
[78] Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism', pp.40-41.
[79] Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians*, p.4; Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, p.5.
[80] Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism', pp.40-41.
[81] Ibid., p.41.
[82] Ian McCalman, 'Females, Feminism and Free Love in an Early Nineteenth Century Radical Movement', *Labour History*, no. 38 (May, 1980), p.3. 'Zetetic' means 'proceeding by inquiry'.

attracted by ideas more than by loyalty to issues of religious doctrine, class or sex.[83] Interestingly, in asking why men and women attracted to Carlile's 'Zetetic' movement should have come from such diverse backgrounds, McCalman refers to a now largely overlooked study by R.S. Neale on *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century*, first published in 1972. Neale identifies the development of a 'middling-class' consciousness in the early nineteenth century quite independent of traditional working-class or middle-class counterparts in which he discerns '"middle-class" deviations from "middle-class" ideology'.[84] 'Middling class' is used as a classifying concept to indicate lines of volatility and instability, distinct from the more financially assured, yet more deferential 'middle class'.[85] While written with artisans in mind, Edward Royle and James Walvin's argument that radicalism found its strongest roots amongst the beleaguered, appealing to those whose 'economic and social position was uncertain, who were losing hope of becoming masters, but who had not yet been reduced to the ranks of the proletariat,' is particularly apposite for this group of heterodox radicals who relied on their minds and their pens for an uncertain and at times highly risky income.[86]

By focusing on the radicalism that emerged on the margins of late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century Rational Dissent or Unitarianism, we are able to discern a subtle distinction, often obscured in the historiography. We note a distinction between parliamentary and popular radicals such as Francis Burdett (1770-1844) and William Cobbett 1763-1835),[87] whose anti-Jacobin slogans and patriotism from the mid-1790s became rooted in the superiority of the Anglican and perhaps more importantly, English establishment, and

[83] See Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*. It is interesting to observe that these two studies of radical communities –Carlile's 'Zetetic' community and the socialist Owenites – are again focused on feminism.
[84] R.S. Neale, *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century* (London and Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p.124.
[85] Ibid, p.3. For details of Neale's five-class model see p.30.
[86] Edward Royle and James Walvin, *English Radicals and Reformers, 1760-1848* (The Harvester Press, 1982), p.189.
[87] With war, radical agitators such as Hunt, John Cartwright (1740-1824) and Cobbett, keen to reject Jacobinism, promoted a form of patriotic radicalism that supported the crown and constitution, while continuing to criticise parliamentary corruption.

the increasingly marginalised, though more cosmopolitan, opinions of heterodox radicals. Another distinction might be observed between heterodox radicals who believed in psycho-sexual equality and the majority of political radicals who would appear to have fallen in line with customary societal values, believing in an essential difference between the sexes.

It is important to appreciate that although many heterodox radicals, notably Coleridge, came to reject the Jacobin excesses of the French Revolution, they did not reject the Enlightenment principles with which it was underpinned. While political radicals such as Burdett exercised a quite dramatic *volte face* in terms of military, monarchical and constitutional support, figures such as Coleridge continued to demonstrate a far more ambivalent attitude both to the forces of radical progression and conservatism.[88] In an essay on Coleridge first published in the *London and Westminster Review* in 1840, Mill rejected the simple label of 'conservative', instead comparing Coleridge, alongside the 'enlightened radical or liberal', as a 'brother Reformer'. Mill revealed an important distinction between the 'small c' catholicity and conservatism of the ecumenical Germano-Coleridgian School and what he described as the truly reactionary 'Tory and Royalist' writers who assumed perhaps the Burkean role of 'severe critic of the new tendencies of society, and an impassioned vindicator of what was good in the past.'[89] Indeed, Coleridge's rejection of Unitarianism towards the end of the eighteenth century did not precede a wholehearted return to Anglicanism but instead a desire to create something approaching an ecumenical 'Christian Church' or 'Church Universal' that would counter intolerance and doctrinal division.[90] Nor did his post-Pantisocratic support of the Burkean principles of property, social order and legal tradition prevent Coleridge from calling for the expansion of the electorate, the rights of women and quite

[88] John Stuart Mill, 'Coleridge', in Alan Ryan (ed.), *John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham* (London, Penguin Books, 2004).
[89] Mill, 'Coleridge', p.198.
[90] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (London, William Pickering, 1839), pp.135-139.

radical reforms to education and marriage, as will be discussed in more detail. From the turn of the nineteenth century public ambivalence amongst heterodox radicals would appear to have hidden a significant degree of private support for radical social and domestic reform, influenced in part by a belief in psycho-sexual equality and the perfectibility of the human mind.

The Complexities of Writing a History of 'Influence'

The interpretation of psychological androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals raises one other significant issue; that of influence. Identifying a group of male and female radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent who adopted a Platonised concept of androgyny makes it imperative that we seek to understand the various influences at play; the intercultural, the religious, the scientific and so on. In particular, two of the most significant sources of influence upon this English heterodox interpretation of androgyny came, it will be argued, from German institutions of cross-disciplinary learning and from a revivified, German-led Platonism. As one of the earliest advocates of psychological androgyny in the twentieth century, it was, however, the author Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) who first warned prospective scholars of influence to be constantly aware that 'influences are infinitely numerous; writers are infinitely sensitive; each writer has a different sensibility.'[91] Woolf's words are a warning against the ever-present temptation to simplify the complexities of influence by extrapolating from the exception to the norm. At most risk, it would seem, are histories of intercultural exchange. Commenting upon a rather schematic study of Victorian Anglo-German relations written by John R. Davis, Michael Ledger-Lomas warns that it is all too easy to yield to the temptation of viewing the process of intercultural exchange as, 'a

[91] Thomas McFarland, 'Patterns of Parataxis in Anglo-German Cultural Currents', in James Pipkin (ed.), *English and German Romanticism: Cross-Currents and Controversies* (Heidelberg, Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1985) p.231.

natural flow of information from one homogenous national culture to another.'[92] While the role of individuals such as Coleridge and Shelley cannot be dismissed, and important works by scholars such as Rosemary Ashton[93] have done much to identify particular and significant points of intercultural exchange, we need to look beyond individual artists and thinkers, to the communities from and within which these people and their ideas emerged. Coleridge's interest in Plato, Kant and the androgynous mind did not emerge in isolation; nor too did Shelley's decision to translate the *Symposium*. Nor, as scholars such as Taylor increasingly acknowledge, did Wollstonecraft's desire to confound the distinctions of sex emerge in isolation either. When unique individuals are studied as part of a broader community, their influence becomes less exceptional and more representative. We need to concentrate, Ledger-Lomas argues, on networks and the transfer of perceptions and information between them and ask 'what domestic objectives [these networks] followed in doing so.' If we are as Ledger-Lomas suggests, to produce more than taxonomies of heterodox radicals, we must endeavour to provide a 'detailed assessment of the aims of these networks, their relation to power, institutions and print media.'[94]

A history of androgyny in any era must assess the concept in its social, political and cultural context, for no concept can ever be said to mean the same to different people in different eras with different experiences and different agendas. To do otherwise would be to approach the idea of androgyny as a 'unit idea', and one, contrary to Arthur O. Lovejoy's original intention, that does not change but remains unaltered across time and space.[95] Heilbrun's *Recognition of Androgyny* might be described as just this; a pseudo-Lovejoy approach to a

[92] Michael Ledger-Lomas, 'The Victorians and Germany (review)', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 148-149. See John R. Davis, *The Victorians and Germany* (New York, Peter Lang, 2007).
[93] See Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought, 1800-1860* (London, Libris, 1994).
[94] Ledger-Lomas, 'The Victorians and Germany (review)', pp. 148-149.
[95] For unit-ideas in history see, Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1964); For a critique of 'unit-ideas' see Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Regarding Method*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

'universal' idea. But the interpretation of androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals was not a 'universal' or 'unit idea' in the sense that one size embraced all and to appreciate this we need to recognise not only the idiosyncrasies of this network of heterodox radicals but the peculiarities of their particular interpretation of androgyny as well and the influences upon this.

Deciding on a label

Thus far I have described this network of 'middling-class' radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent as 'heterodox'. I wish to give some explanation as to why 'heterodox radical' might be the most appropriate label. The adjectives used to describe the individuals within this network shift commonly from radical to reformer to conservative and back again, depending on the time, the issue and quite often the perspective of the scholar, person or people observing them. Figures such as Coleridge and Barbauld have excited a mixture of positive and negative interpretations from contemporaries and present-day academics alike, as will be discussed. Yet, although such people displayed a variety of opinions that might variously be described as radical, liberal and conservative, the Platonised concept of the unsexed mind at this time *was* radical and, for many of a more conservative and evangelical bent, deeply unsettling because it challenged the biblical and patriarchal interpretation of man and woman as complementary, though unequal, sexual opposites.

To appreciate the role and importance of the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny, we need to understand how these people were connected - their social, political and religious connections and status. It is not enough to say that they were largely middle class or that they were largely non-conformist or that they were simply radical. As labels, these are too broad to capture the subtle and important differences that separated this network of radicals from the generality of middle-class Dissenting, Anglican society and indeed radical society. While Clark raises the problem of using terms such as 'radical' and 'radicalism' which prior to 1815

he argues were absent from social and political discussion, McCormack's suggestion that 'radical' 'connotes something about the temperament and critical scope of a political actor' that the more moderate and contemporary terms of 'liberal', 'reformer' and 'ultra-reformer' lack, is in this sense extremely apposite.[96] 'Radical' on its own, however, is not enough, however.

While we might agree that radicals gathered on the margins of Rational Dissent they were not all Rational Dissenters, nor were all of them religious, as Gleadle, Philp and White point out. To call them 'radical Rational Dissenters' would be to ignore those who were either lapsed Rational Dissenters or who were never Rational Dissenters in the first place; to call them 'radical Unitarians' would incur a similar objection. To call them 'radical reformers', used by Anne Janowitz to describe the 'circle of Dissenters and radical reformers' in which Barbauld and Coleridge moved,[97] would not adequately distinguish between the type of reform or the sphere of interest; between radicals concerned more with private and domestic reform, and those more politically-oriented radicals concerned with parliamentary reform and universal suffrage. To call this group 'Romantic radicals', as I had hoped to initially, is to ask too much of a term that is itself a topic of continued scholarly debate. It would align this network of people to a movement that is too associated with the reactionary conservatism of the Burkean 'Romantic right'.[98] Although the concept of psychological androgyny would appear to complicate scholarly notions of Romantic conservatism in England, to use the term 'Romantic' in connection with the type of radicalism discussed here would be to enter into a scholarly debate that is vast and largely incidental to the nature of the study undertaken in this thesis. So while this radical network included well-known Romantics, Coleridge, Shelley and

[96] See Clark, *English Society*, p.348; McCormack, *Independent Man*, p.125.
[97] Anne Janowitz, 'Amiable and radical sociability: Anna Barbauld's "free familiar conversation"', in Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (eds.), *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain 1170-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.62.
[98] For associations between Burke's conservatism and Romanticism in England see Peter Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism: War, popular politics and English radical reformism, 1800-1815* (Hampshire, Scolar Press, 1996); McCormack, *Independent Man*, p. 172.

indeed Blake, the label 'Romantic radicals' will be avoided, especially as Romantics such as Wordsworth and Byron would not appear to have expressed any sympathy with the Platonised and egalitarian concept of androgyny.

But what of the term 'egalitarian radicals', used by Chernock to describe those who believed in the intellectual equality of the sexes and by Eve Tavor Bannet in her nuanced study of the broad and complicated female response to the ideology of domesticity and the private sphere?[99] While 'egalitarian' might well describe the gender-neutral and Platonised philosophy of this group, it cannot account for the well-noted expressions of ambivalence towards issues of universal suffrage and class that existed across this network, from Godwin to Wollstonecraft; Coleridge to Shelley. 'Platonic radicals' is too specific and too philosophical to describe a network galvanised by broader and more practical questions of social reform. The association of 'Platonic' both then and now with non-sexual friendship might also cause confusion; while 'androgynous radicals', could seem faintly ridiculous, conjuring in the mind of the reader images of people, much like 1970s pop stars, clad in gender-neutral clothing.

One label that might conceivably work is 'cosmopolitan radicals'. In a lecture on philosophy in 1819, Coleridge referred to a community of 'Cosmopolites'.[100] Esther Wohlgemut refers rightly to the radical understanding of patriotism and love of country as something that extended beyond borders to embrace the nation as a civil and cosmopolitan union, in contrast to that described by Burke in 'the insular terms of inheritance and local attachment'.[101] Yet, again, although an appropriate label for many within this network, it does not adequately reflect the nature of their radicalism. They were not radicals because of their

[99] Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman', pp.511-531; Eve Tavor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.6.
[100] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy', in J.R. de J. Jackson (ed.), *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 8 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971-2002), p.860.
[101] Esther Wohlgemut, *Romantic Cosmopolitanism* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.5.

cosmopolitanism so much as they were cosmopolitans because of their socio-religious status, beliefs and ideas.

In the end, therefore, although no term or label is ever perfect, on reflection, the one term that is perhaps most appropriate and revealing, is 'heterodox'. More so than any other term, 'heterodox radicals' highlights the general ideological and religious heterodoxy of this group not only from Anglicanism and more orthodox Dissenters but increasingly from the growing conservatism of Unitarians and from the more conventional beliefs of political and religious radicals such as Cobbett and Priestley. While I appreciate that Unitarians are and were often described as 'heterodox Dissenters',[102] describing the radicals in this thesis as 'heterodox radicals' rather than 'heterodox Dissenters' allows us to identify a group whose interpretation of androgyny represented for many, 'heterodox Dissenters' included, a heterodoxy that went beyond the norm, reflecting the insidious influence of unnatural, foreign ideas. I hope to demonstrate that it was a belief in human perfectibility and the Platonised concept of the unsexed mind that bound heterodox radicals above and beyond the interests of sectarianism, politics and patriotism. This in turn would lead to their growing intellectual and ideological isolation.

Methodology and Chapter Outlines

To identify and appreciate the peculiarities and the use of the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny as interpreted and developed by heterodox radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent in England between the 1790s and the 1840s it is necessary to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, tying together the varying and often separate strands of literary, philosophical, psychoanalytical, sociological, pedagogic and political histories. This thesis thus draws upon a variety of texts from novels and poetry, to philosophical and political tracts, journal articles, radical newspapers, sermons, advice manuals, text books, private

[102] See White, *Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, pp.12-13.

letters and diaries. It draws upon recent revisionist scholarship, particularly in studies of Romanticism, radicalism and Rational Dissent. It is also indebted to histories of early feminism, past and present, which hint at the presence of the concept within heterodox radical discourse.

In exploring the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny, this thesis investigates four key areas: the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny, distinct from the patriarchal and biblical interpretation of the concept; its influence in largely private and domestic issues of education and marriage; the influence of German ideas and methods of analysis upon the interpretation and the apparent failure of the concept to challenge the growing popularity of the doctrine of separate spheres. The thesis is divided into five chapters. While chapter one looks initially at the Classical origins of the concept of androgyny, paying attention to the development of Platonism and its influence upon early Christianity and notions of wholeness, the main focus of the chapter rests on the reception of Platonism in England between the 1790s and 1840s and of the importance of appreciating the radical and marginal nature of Platonic study at the time. Acknowledging this helps to shed further light on Shelley's translation of the *Symposium*, noting critical differences between it and earlier and later English translations. The chapter also draws attention to the hitherto largely neglected heterodox reinterpretation of Uranianism, altering the original homosexual understanding of 'higher love' experienced by men, into a heterosexual and hence egalitarian relationship between men and women. I wish also in this chapter to interrogate evidence of the elision of androgyny and hermaphroditism and ask to what extent the conflation was intentional.

At a time when German influence in England, like Platonism, is thought by many to have experienced a sharp decline, chapter two places the concept of psychological androgyny in its Anglo-German context by highlighting the hitherto underexplored links between heterodox

radicals in England and German intellectuals at German universities. It considers the ways in which theological, philosophic, scientific and pedagogic ideas and methods of analysis developed in some of Germany's leading universities helped to inspire the heterodox concept of the unsexed mind in England.

Where chapters one and two consider the intellectual influences; chapters three and four take a more practical slant. They examine the role played by the German-inspired and Platonised concept of psychological androgyny in the emerging debates surrounding education and marital reform. Chapter three explores the influence of the concept of androgyny upon new methods of teaching, noting the creation of gender-neutral curriculums for boys and girls and the promotion of co-education. It examines arguments concerning sexual integration and 'emulation'. It examines, also, the ways in which the classroom became the platform upon which heterodox radicals sought to effect intellectual change in the private and domestic sphere, from which equality in the public sphere would, they believed, eventually emerge. Chapter four examines the debate on marital reform and the practical interventions. In reigniting the Genesis controversy and the 'myth' of Creation, this thesis seeks to reveal the challenge to patriarchy posed by the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny, out of which heterodox radicals called for husband and wife to be made equals in law. It examines the importance of heterosexual Uranianism enshrined in the concept and the intriguing examples of the surreptitious removal of the vow of female obedience from the matrimonial ceremony in unofficial editions of the reformed Unitarian *Book of Common Prayer*.

Finally, in chapter five I wish to put forward some suggestions as to why this heterodox concept failed to challenge or undermine the sufficiency of the doctrine of separate spheres. Though this chapter does not seek to make any substantive claims at this point – more research would be required – I wish to consider the role that the Great Reform Act of 1832 and key reforms thereafter might have played in the failure of the heterodox concept and the

strengthening of the patriarchal doctrine of separate spheres, by introducing legislation that succeeded in undermining the potential efficacy of the concept of the unsexed mind. Initial support for this might be found in the debate leading to and the ramifications of the Marriage Act of 1836. I wish to consider also the possibility of a fracturing of heterodox radicalism and the belief in the unsexed mind, noticeable within Owenite socialism from the 1830s, and the rise of a more gendered politics visible in Chartism and the emerging women's movement.

Many of the subjects covered in this thesis have been explored by scholars before: Androgyny; Rational Dissent; Unitarian influence upon education and marriage; the influence of German ideas upon English thinkers. Bringing these often separate studies together, however, under the banner of androgyny, this thesis hopes to bring this liminal, ambiguous and often implicit concept into sharper focus, highlighting its presence and importance within heterodox radical discourse between the 1790s and the 1840s. Focusing on the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny will, I hope, shed new light upon a largely disenfranchised group of men and women who, prior to the emergence of gendered political movements and the taxonomies of sex from the mid to late-nineteenth century, employed the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny to inaugurate what one radical described as a 'revolution of the human mind'.[103]

[103] Caius, 'Cursory Remarks on Prejudice, and on Education as a Cause', *Monthly Repository* (2 May 1836), p.323.

Chapter One

The Platonic Androgyne and Heterosexual Uranianism

In this chapter I wish to do three things. I wish to start by exploring the classical origins of androgyny and its relationship to Platonism and the influence of both upon later philosophical and religious ideas to better understand the peculiarities of the heterodox interpretation and why it would appear to have deviated from the theories of mind developed within Rational Dissent of theorists such as the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) and the philosopher and physician, David Hartley (c.1705-1757). Secondly, I wish to examine the reputation and reception of Platonism, and more specifically the *Symposium*, in England at this time and ask to what degree its reputation and the reputation of its exponents may have impeded the promotion of this egalitarian concept. Thirdly, I wish to examine the growth of scientific fascination with the physical qualities of hermaphroditism in the decades before and during this period and ask whether, with knowledge of the above, the conflation of the Platonic androgyne and the Ovidian hermaphrodite was in any way intentional.

Though unpublished in his lifetime, Shelley's translation of the *Symposium* represents the most explicit rendering of the heterodox concept of psychological androgyny during the Romantic era and through this the promotion of a more egalitarian heterosexual Uranianism through which the concept of psychological androgyny attained perfection. Comparing Shelley's translation with that of others not only allows us to better appreciate the art of translation and transmission but the subtle art of interpretation as well, for no translation can ever be said to be entirely faithful to the original and it is in the sometimes intentional inaccuracies that the most fascinating and the most revealing insights into the objectives of the translator are to be found. Publishing an unbowdlerised translation of the *Symposium* during the Romantic era without serious repercussions was all but impossible and it is the moral dilemma voiced by Shelley to close friends over whether or not to publish his

translation that allows us to appreciate more fully not only the extent to which mainstream society was fearful of anything that smacked of sexual abnormality or immorality, but why the Platonic and heterodox concept of psychological androgyny was, for the most part, promoted implicitly. Understanding this will allow us to make better sense of the approaches to social reform adopted by radicals in the areas of education and marriage, discussed in the following chapters. With this in mind, this chapter will refer to four different translations of the *Symposium*, the most modern, translated in 2008 will act as an important point of departure for the other earlier and, arguably, less faithful translations. This fourth and more neutral translation is by Robin Waterfield.[1] For Shelley's original and unabridged translation I refer to David O'Connor's 2002 edition.[2]

Androgyny and its Classical Origins

One of the earliest known examples of the cosmological androgyne and the notion of wholeness and division is to be found in the fragments of the Greek, pre-Socratic philosopher, Empedocles (c.490-c.430BC). According to Empedocles, the Universe was once a sphere, divided into four elements – earth, air, fire and water – these coexisted with two powers, Love and Strife. As Strife gradually increased, Love, and the bond holding the elements together, broke, and this created division.[3] Elements of Empedocles's story of wholeness and division are found in Paracelsus and the alchemical tradition of the Hermetic androgyne, as well as in Kabbalistic and Gnostic doctrines and early Christian descriptions of an androgynous Christ.[4] The most famous description of androgyny and arguably the most influential in western intellectual thought came from the Greek philosopher Plato (c.429-

[1] Plato, *Symposium*, translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008).
[2] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Symposium of Plato: The Shelley Translation*, ed. by David K. O'Connor (St. Augustine's Press, 2002).
[3] D. O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle: A Reconstruction from the Fragments and Secondary Sources* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.1-3.
[4] See Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, p.64.

347BC).[5] Plato's dialogue on love, the *Symposium*, featured Aristophanes' tale about the splitting in half of the original human species and through this the creation of sexual division. Humans, according to Aristophanes, had originally consisted of three sexes - man, woman and man-woman. They were round, with two faces on opposite sides of one head, four arms, four legs and two 'privy members'. The physical strength and self-sufficient arrogance of these humans encouraged them to challenge the authority of the Gods. Their challenge, however, was defeated and as punishment, Zeus had them cut in two. The binary forms of modern man and woman were formed and with them the eternal striving for sexual and spiritual completion.[6]

Androgyny and the Influence of Platonism

To appreciate the significance of the Platonised interpretation of androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals we need first of all to explore the influence of later interpretations upon Plato's original teachings, for as Anna Baldwin remarks, 'the process of transmission was inevitably one of transformation', and a transformation used more often than not to question or redefine the beliefs and practices of the societies in which its adherents lived.[7] The Platonised concept of psychological androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals was, of course, an interpretation.

Platonism, along with other Hellenistic philosophies, was disseminated throughout the Greek Empire, which at its peak spread from Europe to North Africa and Western Asia. It would later be absorbed into the intellectual thought of the Roman Empire. It is, of course, important to know that the first Neoplatonist, the Greek-speaking Plotinus (c.204-270AD), a citizen of the Roman Empire, lived some six hundred years after Plato. As Anne Sheppard points out, it

[5] Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne in German Romanticism*, p.16.
[6] Benjamin Jowett, 'Symposium', in Eugene O'Connor (ed.), *Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium: Plato on Homosexuality* (New York, Prometheus Books, 1991), p.121.
[7] Anna Baldwin, 'Preface', in Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *Platonism and the English Imagination* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.xiii.

was Plotinus and not Plato who developed the metaphysical system of the 'One' as the transcendent source of all beings. Although Platonism was concerned with the theory of Forms, it was with Plotinus that Platonism took on a far more mystical nature with the transcendent human soul becoming the most important element. Yet crucially, Plotinus did not view himself as a rival philosopher but as an interpreter of Plato and he and his followers described themselves as Platonists. The term Neoplatonist came a lot later but for the purposes of clarity I will refer from now on to these later 'Platonists' as 'Neoplatonists'.[8] Rather than adopting the searching and open-ended methods of investigation employed by Plato and his mentor, Socrates, later Platonists sought to unify and systemise Plato's ideas, melding them into a coherent metaphysical whole that had not existed in the original and more earthly dialogues. Plotinus' Neoplatonic metaphysics was further developed after his death by the Syrian philosopher Iamblichus (c.250-c.325AD). This Neoplatonism was then adopted by the last non-Christian Emperor of Rome, Julian the Apostate (331-363AD) and taught in the Platonist schools at Athens and Alexandria between the fourth and the sixth centuries AD. But, aside from Plotinus, it was the Greek philosopher Proclus (412-485AD) who would become the most influential Neoplatonist in western thought, writing extensive commentaries on many of the Platonic dialogues. Like Neoplatonists before him, Proclus considered the Platonic texts to have been divinely inspired and the obscure ideas within them understandable only to the initiated. Synthesising both early and later Neoplatonic metaphysics, in *Elements of Theology*, Proclus presented his own philosophical system as a faithful interpretation of Plato. But mixed into these commentaries were often interpretations of Aristotle's philosophy as well. It became common practice for these synthesised Neoplatonic commentaries to provide an understanding of and an aid to the interpretation of

[8] See James Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge* (London, LEGENDA, 2009), pp.13-34, 101. According to Vigus, Coleridge is credited as the first in England to use the word 'Neoplatonist', derived from the word 'Neoplatonic' - coined in the mid eighteenth century by the German historian of philosophy, Johann Jacob Brucker. 'Neoplatonic' distinguished between Plato's original works and the interpretations of later followers.

Plato's ideas. As Sheppard explains, the interpretation of Plato promoted by Neoplatonists had a profound effect on later writers and thinkers into the Renaissance and beyond. Thus appreciation of Platonic influence requires knowledge of Neoplatonic thought.

The first three centuries AD witnessed a number of religious developments, such as Orphic Theology, the Chaldean Oracles, Gnosticism and Kabbalism, which as Sheppard notes, were important for the subsequent history of Platonism. For instance, Platonism or Platonic Theology, as some described it,[9] was used in the religio-philosophical writings of the Hermetica, a set of heterogeneous writings produced in Egypt between the first and third centuries and attributed to the mythical figure of Hermes Trismegistus.[10] If the esoteric theology of Gnosticism, meaning knowledge (*gnõsis*), was an attempt to synthesise Judaism and the popular and Hellenised religion of Egypt, it was the Jewish philosopher, Philo (c.20BC-50AD), living in Alexandria, who made a systematic attempt to 'Hellenise Jewish theology', transforming the anthropomorphic Deity of the Old Testament into, as Baldwin describes, an 'immaterial Being, above space and time, whose manifestation in this world is through the logos (Word)…described as "the second God", the pattern and mediator of the creation, the archetype of human reason'.[11]

Although the strands of influence and transmission are complex and often ambiguous, the correlations between this Hellenised Jewish theology and western Christianity can be traced in the emergence of the immaterial Deity of the New Testament and of the opposition between spirit and body in St. Paul's account of the 'Old and New Adam'.[12] Neoplatonic ideas such as the theory of emanation; the ascent to God through the Divine power of eros (love), and the notion that the human mind might recover its original knowledge of the higher

[9] Luc Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, trans. by Janet Lloyed (Berkely, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 2002), p.106.
[10] Anne Sheppard, 'Plato and the Neoplatonists', in Baldwin and Hutton (eds.), *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp.3-5.
[11] Baldwin, *Platonism and the English Imagination* , p.21.
[12] Ibid., p.22.

realm or the 'Good' were absorbed into early western Christianity, influencing concepts such as the Trinity and the exhortation to turn from the material to the spiritual world.[13] The *Symposium*, as too the *Phaedrus*, became important dialogues not so much for their views on love, as for their 'picture of the soul's ascent from the material world to the higher realm'.[14]

It was thus the later influences of Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Kabbalism and early Judeo-Christianity that infused the Platonic concept of androgyny with a transcendental, mystical and asexual spirituality that did not exist to anything like the same degree in Plato's original and largely anthropological account. As Weil observes, in their desire to promote the divinely-inspired spirituality of Platonism, Neoplatonists were disinclined to acknowledge the earthy sexuality present in Plato's dialogues.[15] Any discussion on sensual and earthly sexuality was for the most part negative. And this negativity continued in Judeo-Christian interpretations. Adam as primal androgyne was represented as a non-material transcendental light, 'emanating from a single source'.[16] Where androgyny was associated with the transcendental, material sexuality was associated with the fall into sexual division, as will be explored below.

It was also from these later sources, with their roots in the syncretised and spiritual systems of Neoplatonism, that the patriarchal and hierarchical image of Adam as the original androgyne emerged in western thought. One of the most influential communicators of this patriarchal theory of cosmological androgyny, imbibed through the esoteric, mystical and occult traditions of Hermeticism and the Christianised versions of Kabbalist doctrines, was the German theosophist and mystic, Jacob Boehme (1575-1624).[17] Although not a Platonist,

[13] Baldwin, *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp.22-23.
[14] Sheppard, 'Plato and the Neoplatonists', in Baldwin and Hutton (eds.), *Platonism and the English Imagination*, pp.10-11.
[15] Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, p.64.
[16] Ibid., p.64.
[17] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, pp.160-161.

as M.H. Abrams notes, 'the ancient myth of primal and spiritual man, the microcosmic androgyne', in Boehme's metaphysical system was a 'remarkably subtle and extremely influential innovation upon the Christian form of the Neoplatonic circle of emanation and return'.[18] Boehme's mystical interpretation of the androgynous Adam would become a source of notable influence in German Romanticism, which in turn would come, as Friedrichsmeyer points out, to influence the theories of Freud and Jung.[19] Traces of his influence can be found also in the ideas of English Romantics such as Blake, Coleridge and Shelley but with notable qualification. In Boehme's theosophy, the first principle was made creative by 'generating its own contrary', through which it then proceeded to reconcile itself. As Abrams explains, it is the creation of this (feminine) contrary that creates opposition, 'at once mutually attractive and repulsive, whose momentary conciliations give way to renewed attempts at mastery by the opponent powers'. It is this opposition that creates 'the necessary condition for sustaining the possibility of progression back to the strenuous peace of the primal equalibrium'.[20] What is notable in this, and earlier anti-material interpretations of the androgyne, is the emphasis placed upon a first and directing principle which is masculine. If we are looking for distinctions between a broadly 'Neoplatonic' interpretation of androgyny and that developed by heterodox radicals in England we might find it here. With its complex Neoplatonic, esoteric, occult and Judeo-Christian heritage, it was Boehm's hierarchical interpretation of androgyny that would come in part to influence the more stereotypical image of woman as spiritual ideal and 'other' promoted by the Swedish Lutheran theologian and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), the prophet Joanna Southcott (1750-1814) and her followers the Southcottians, and the socialist followers of the French political and economic theorist, Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825).[21] The notion of androgyny promoted by these was very much a

[18] Ibid., p.161.
[19] Friedrichsmeyer, 'Subversive Androgyne', p.69.
[20] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p.162.
[21] Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, pp.65-67.

gendered concept, with masculine intellectualism and feminine moralism combining into what Taylor describes as a 'Manichean vision of reality as a unity of polar opposites, in which the masculine half included God, the Spiritual and the Physical, and the feminine half comprised Nature, the Material and the Moral'.[22]

It is for this reason that we need to look again at the particular concept of androgyny promoted by English heterodox radicals, distinct from the more traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation endorsed by the generality of society. For while Boehmian and Neoplatonic notions of androgyny were undoubtedly influential, certainly in their focus upon the transcendental, and are thus difficult at times to contradistinguish, it was greater familiarity and engagement with the original Platonic dialogues and in particular that of the *Symposium*, and engagement with advances in the human and natural sciences, that turned the heterodox radical concept of androgyny into something more earthly, more egalitarian and, arguably, more focused on the realities of the day. As Coleridge observed in his notebook in 1810 on the correct method of studying the 'true transcendental Logic' of the Platonic Philosophy, that the student should discern how far Plotinus:

> had carried the impersonating, *entifying* spirit of Platonism beyond the allowed Limits of just transcendental Logic – then Proclus, as the extreme of this – and having thus formed a complete notion of what Platonism became, then to come to the Source - & there learn, how far the germs are contained in the writings of Plato, Timaeus Locrus, & Ocellus Lucanaus/how far they have tortured the innocent text by the same processes, as the Theologians have the Text of the Bible…& how far they have improved, how far corrupted the original Platonic Doctrines.[23]

[22] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.170.
[23] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1808-1819*, vol. 3, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973), 3934.

It is difficult to say how far Coleridge followed his own advice, but his knowledge of the contents and layout of the German Bipont Edition and of Tiedemann's companion volume of explanatory notes do, as James Vigus argues, suggest sufficient acquaintance with 'Plato scholarship', rather than simply Neoplatonic interpretations.[24]

Abrams is in fact one of the few late twentieth-century scholars of Romanticism to view the interpretation of androgyny adopted 'Romantics' as more noticeably Platonic and distinct from that present in previous eras. If the heterodox concept of androgyny that developed during the Romantic era was still based on an ideal, it was one that was no longer dependent purely upon Neoplatonic and Judaeo-Christian theories of emanation but, according to Abrams, upon the emerging scientific theory of evolution. The material world and the notion of androgyny is no longer a *descent* from perfection but a necessary and important stage in the *ascent* to human perfection. The objective is no longer the 'simple unity of the origin, but the complex unity of the terminus of the process of cumulative division and reintegration…for what makes him civilized, and a man, is his aspiration toward a harmony and integrity which is much higher than the unity he has lost'.[25] Diversity and individuality are preserved in what Coleridge described as 'multeity in unity'; a notion remarkably similar to that voiced by Fox. Rather than the undifferentiated 'One', a unified and harmonious whole required a diverse multiplicity of component parts resulting from the complex process of human development.[26] Such multiplicity and diversity therefore challenged the antithetical and simple archetypes of masculine and feminine.

Abrams' close analysis of the distinctions between emanation and evolution is crucial for our understanding of the heterodox concept of androgyny during the Romantic era. But where Abrams' essentially literary study falls down as too do the studies of Weil and Heilbrun, is in

[24] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.25.
[25] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p.185.
[26] Ibid., p.186.

the relative neglect of the significance of scientific influence. When Abrams writes of Coleridge's desire not for an 'undifferentiated unity' but a return to a 'multeity-in-unity', and his likening of man to a 'growing plant', he merely touches upon the poet's interest in science.[27] Rather than the occult, esoteric and mystical science of alchemy, in which the patriarchal notion of androgyny was maintained, intriguing parallels were discerned between discoveries in the new sciences of botany, physiology and anthropology and the mythical descriptions of nature discussed in ancient myths and in particular Plato's original, pre-Christian dialogues. For Coleridge, the sciences of botany and biology could demonstrate the central and vital force of the generative process. As Abrams demonstrates, in 1810 Coleridge perceived in the unconscious activity of a plant as it 'assimilates outer elements' effecting 'its own secret growth', the same yet more refined pattern in the evolution of human development and reason, 'for the highest human reason re-achieves at the end of the [biological] scale the unity of the beginning, but in a functioning that incorporates all the intervening stages of differentiation'.[28] For Coleridge, human development and nature were one, for in living things, the 'most general law [is] *polarity*, or the essential dualism of Nature,' which exists in the tendency 'at once to individuate and connect,' in a process by which 'thesis and antithesis, position and counterposition' necessarily 'unite in a synthesis'.[29] On the surface, Coleridge's words might imply a conventional understanding of sexual combination as that of opposites meeting but there is also apparent within this the belief that the individual unites and combines within themselves the polarities or differences of their parents and is thus a product of 'synthesis'. There is no return to the original primordial past but a process that is progressive.

[27] Ibid., p.268.
[28] Ibid., p.270.
[29] See Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p.267; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Essay XIII', *The Friend: A Series of Essays*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London, Rest Fenner, 1818), p.155.

Thus, the heterodox Platonised interpretation can be said to have broken the perpetual cycle of Neoplatonic emanation. In the early Judeo-Christian and Neoplatonic descriptions of androgyny, there is no progress but merely perpetual continuity: the continuity of Divine omniscient emanation in which free will does not exist. Like the Greek tale of Prometheus, humankind is fated to repeat the cycle of emanation perpetually.

Although Coleridge never admitted to reading the *Symposium*, there are notable parallels between his idea of 'intervening stages of differentiation' and the description of human development offered by Diotima. If we read Shelley's translation of Diotima's thoughts on generation, we notice something markedly similar to Coleridge's biological and botanical description of 'multeity in unity'. 'For, although each human being be severally said to live', argues Diotima:

> and be the same from youth to old age, yet, that which is called the same, never contains within itself the same things, but always is becoming new by the loss and change of that which it possessed before…Manners, morals, opinions, desires, pleasures, sorrows, fears; none of these ever remain unchanged in the same persons; but some die away, and others are produced…In this manner every thing [sic] moral is preserved: not that it is constant and eternal, like that which is divine; but that in the place of what has grown old and is departed, it leaves another new like that which it was itself'.[30]

We might also see something similar in the Platonic notion of evolutionary development described in Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, in which the Socratic process of acquiring knowledge is described in some ways as an evolutionary process: 'Meanwhile the unfettered progress of truth is always salutary. Its advances are gradual, and each step prepares the general mind for that which is to follow'.[31] As with Coleridge, there is no record of Godwin having read the *Symposium*, but parallels might be drawn with the discussion

[30] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, [207d-208b], p.52.
[31] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.463.

between Diotima and Socrates on beauty as the ultimate good and the path to human immortality and Godwin's belief in human perfectibility described in 'Book VIII: Of Property', in which human mortality might be overcome through 'ineffable ardour' knowledge and love.[32] Importantly, the point derived from the *Symposium* and indeed from Platonism was that human perfection was to be achieved on earth. We might argue that the study of Platonism, in conjunction with science, helped to break this dogmatic cycle of emanation.

Androgyny in Nature

For those intent on discovering the origins of life, material evidence emerging from advances in the natural and human sciences encouraged people to look again at the ancient mythical and religious tales of dual-sexed creatures. As already noted, the root of these tales can be traced back to Platonism and in particular the *Symposium*. From the late eighteenth century the science of botany was an increasingly popular subject, aided by the critical studies of the Swedish botanist, Carl Linnaeus (c.1707-1778). Linnaeus' intimate study of plant reproduction resulted in a new system of botanical classification, known as the 'Sexual System'. In this new system, plants were divided into '24 CLASSES'. The 23rd class, 'Polygamia', contained plants which had 'constantly besides hermaphrodite flowers, others, either male or female, on the same plant'.[33] By identifying sexuality as the key to botanical classification, Linnaeus' system helped to reveal the prevalence of hermaphroditism in nature and pointed for some, crucially, to the possibility that all life evolved from primitive androgynous organisms. An English translation of his writings published in 1782 by the botanist Dr Richard Pulteney (1730-1801), was a great success. According to one critic, Pulteney's *A General View of the Writings of Linneaus* 'contributed more than any work…to

[32] Ibid., pp.458-459. On this, Godwin's opinions changed remarkably little between the first and third editions. For Godwin's Socratic influences, see p.xvii.
[33] Richard Pulteney, *A General View of the Writings of Linneaus* (London, T. Payne, 1771), p.120.

diffuse a taste for Linnaean knowledge in the country'.[34] But this was no dry scientific discourse printed for an exclusive and learned readership. Contrary to what might have been expected, the somewhat erotic emphasis upon the sexuality of plants and Linnaeus' use of binomial nomenclature seemed to aide his popularity, and his use of recognisable cultural metaphors such as lawful marriage and nuptial beds, made the discussions on plant anatomy and sexuality palatable and respectable for female study.[35] His use of recognisable and evocative terms such as polygamy and hermaphrodite and the popularity of his system in England, indicates the relative ubiquity and common currency of such terms.

The physician and natural philosopher, Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), was another to be influenced by the Linnaean system and was doubtless aware of Pulteney's translation. The grandfather of the author of *The Origin of Species*, Darwin also translated the works of Linnaeus, producing for the Botanical Society *A System of Vegetables* in 1783 and *The Families of Plants* in 1787. It was Darwin's botanical poetry, however, that would help to promote the Linnaean system of sexuality and too the theory of evolution to a broader public, including it is suggested, Coleridge, Blake and the Shelleys.[36] Fearful that his poems would discredit his reputation as a serious scientist, Darwin published *The Loves of the Plants* anonymously in 1789. Its success led to a companion piece, *The Botanic Garden*, which was published in 1791. In 1794 Darwin published his 'medico-philosophical' work, *Zoonomia*, this time on the human body and the theory of biological learning, both physical and mental. By the third edition in 1801 Darwin had moved from a theory that the inheritance of habits and characteristics came from the male parent, to a theory that, based on Linnaeus' theory of vegetable generation, suggested that all species of warm-blooded animals, male and female,

[34] I.D. Hughes, 'Pulteney, Richard (1730-1801)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 20/7/2018.
[35] Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind has no Sex?: Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, Harvard University Press, 1989), p.242.
[36] Maureen McNeil, 'Darwin, Erasmus (1731-1802)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 25/07/2018.

may have come from 'one living filament, which the great first cause endued with animality'.[37] If Darwin was initially influenced by the associationist philosophies of Locke, Hartley, Hume and Priestley, opposing the notion of innate ideas and supporting the theory of hereditary development through environment and emulation,[38] his revisions in 1801 would suggest some engagement with theories of androgyny and the ideas present in Platonism. Darwin's revised theory allotted equal roles to the biological influence of male and female organisms thereby shifting the role of the female from one of passive vessel to one of active participant.[39] But perhaps Darwin's most radical and contentious work, published posthumously in 1803, was *The Temple of Nature, or, The Origin of Society*. This was, as Maureen McNeil attests, his 'poetic paean to evolution'.[40] As a member of the radical Lunar Society in Birmingham which included figures such as Priestley, the educational writer and engineer, Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), the engineer and scientist, James Watt (1736-1819) and the master potter, Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795), Darwin was a supporter of social and political change; of the abolition of slavery and of religious toleration. What is perhaps less noted is how his emerging theory of evolution from a single or androgynous 'filament', based on an extensive knowledge of religious, scientific and philosophic sources, including Plato, came to influence a noticeably heterodox and more egalitarian understanding of the human mind and one that from the 1790s would result in growing suspicion towards his supposedly Jacobinical and egalitarian ideas.[41] This culmination of knowledge is visible in *The Temple of Nature*. In a footnote that perhaps reflects a familiarity at least with the growing German-led debate on physical truths clothed in myth (discussed in chapter two), Darwin argued that while the 'allegory' of Adam and Eve might have been designed to teach obedience to God's commands, the sheer number of religious, mythological and

[37] Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia; or, The Laws of Organic Life*, vol. 2, 3rd. ed. (London, J. Johnson, 1801), p.240.
[38] See McNeil, 'Darwin, Erasmus (1731-1802)'.
[39] Ibid.,
[40] Ibid..
[41] Note in 'Unsex'd Females', Polwhele's reference to 'botanizing girls'.

philosophical references, including that by Plato, to the androgynous union of men and women, 'must have arisen from profound inquiries into the original state of animal existence.'[42] As a classics student at Cambridge and then as a medical student at Edinburgh (known for its study of the Greek classics) he was extremely knowledgeable on such matters.[43] Darwin's familiarity with the *Symposium* is alluded to in *Zoonomia* in which he suggests that Plato observing 'the reciprocal generation of inferior animals, as snails and worms, was of opinion, that mankind with all other animals were originally hermaphrodites during the infancy of the world, and were in process of time separated into male and female'.[44] The implications upon the teachings of Christianity and organised religion of this theory of gradual evolution, with its roots in Platonism, rather than 'a sudden evolution of the whole by the Almighty fiat' were duly noted by critics as tantamount to atheism.[45]

Moreover, though quick to assert that the more 'perfect' animals were 'propagated by [hetero]sexual reproduction only',[46] Darwin's theory of reproduction, expressed most notably in his discussion on hereditary disease in his additional notes prefixed to *The Temple of Nature,* suggests a more egalitarian understanding of sexual intercourse and sexual roles: 'Finally the art to improve the sexual progeny of either vegetables or animals must consist in choosing the most perfect of both sexes, that is the most beautiful in respect to the body, and the most ingenious in respect to the mind; but where one sex is given, whether male or female, to improve a progeny from that person may consist in choosing a partner of a contrary temperament'. The Platonic influence on Darwin's ideas is notable in CANTO iii, 'Progress of the Mind', in which the young God Eros clasps Dione, the Goddess of Beauty, in

[42] Erasmus Darwin, *The Temple of Nature; or, The Origin of Society: A Poem with Philosophical Notes* (London, J. Johnson, 1803), p.42.
[43] McNeil, 'Darwin, Erasmus (1731-1802)'.
[44] Darwin, *Zoonomia; Or, The Laws of Organic Life*, vol. 1 (London, J. Johnson, 1794), p.508.
[45] Ibid., p.509.
[46] Ibid., pp.240-241.

'Platonic arms' [190].[47] Although offering quite stereotypical images of male and female virtue, the reference to 'Platonic arms' lends a note of ambiguity and aspiration. In the conventional sense, 'Platonic arms' represents the chaste embrace of friendship; in the Platonic sense, of which Darwin's reference to 'chaste seduction' would suggest, 'Platonic arms' represented the promise not only of physical and sexual embrace but of shared knowledge and intellectual growth. It is through texts such as those by Darwin and others such as Shelley, that we are able to note the influence of Platonism and the theory of the unsexed mind.

The Reception of Platonism in England

If by the 1790s Plato was little read in England, it was because his reputation as a promoter of illicit and unnatural acts was well-established. For a philosopher whose theory of ideas and 'The Good' was integral to the development of early Christian theology and philosophy,[48] Plato's vivid descriptions of male same-sex love and pederasty – most notably in the *Symposium* – as too his apparent belittlement of heterosexual love made for uneasy bed-fellows. The satirical novelist, poet and close friend of Shelley, Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866), captured the seemingly entrenched climate of suspicion and disapproval to perfection in his novel *Crotchet Castle*, published in 1831. In a discussion between the learned Rev. Dr Folliot and his somewhat naïve, nouveau riche host, Mr Crotchet, Folliot explains that in England Plato is held to be 'little better than a misleader of youth, and they have shown their contempt for him, not only by never reading him (a mode of contempt in which they deal very largely), but even by never publishing a complete edition of him'.[49] As Coleridge quipped, 'in this free-thinking time, many an empty head is shook at Aristotle and Plato: and the writings

[47] Ibid., p.99.
[48] See Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London, Routledge, 2000), p.122.
[49] Thomas Love Peacock, *Crotchet Castle* (London, T. Hookham, 1831), pp.134-135.

of these celebrated ancients are by most men treated on a level with the dry and barbarous lucubrations of the Schoolmen'.[50]

But it would seem that Plato had never been particularly popular in England. A sporadic and far from comprehensive trickle of Plato's works in English appeared between 1533 and the 1840s.[51] These included a commentary in 1700, entitled *Platonism Unveiled, or an Essay concerning the Opinions of Plato,*[52] and *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Plato* published anonymously in 1760, both of which provided brief abstracts of the dialogues as a way of addressing popular misunderstandings.[53] An abridged English translation of André Dacier's French translation appeared in 1701, with five reprints in 1720, 1739, 1749, 1761, and 1772.[54] According to Frank B. Evans, Nathaniel Forster's edition of the *Lovers, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo* was one of the most popular eighteenth-century collections, published in 1745, 1752, 1765 and 1800, yet if there is evidence of it being 'required reading in the fourth year at [Oxford] university' Evans' own evidence for this or indeed its broader popularity in England is unclear.[55] Despite Evans arguing that 'there was no dearth in the eighteenth century of important men who had read and appreciated [Plato's] dialogues', [56] anyone wishing to read all of Plato's works in England had to be fluent in Greek or Latin. The only complete edition of Plato's works available in England until the early nineteenth century was the German-produced Bipont Edition published in ten volumes from 1781 to 1787, which contained the Greek text of the sixteenth century French printer and classical scholar, Henri Estienne (known as Henricus Stephanus), with Ficino's Latin translation above

[50] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lay Sermons*, ed. by Derwent Coleridge, 3rd ed. (London, Edward Moxon, 1852), p.196.
[51] Joseph William Moss, *A Manual of Classical Bibliography* (London, 1825), p.448.
[52] *Platonism Unveil'd: Or an Essay Concerning the Notions and Opinions of Plato, And some Antient and Modern Divines his Followers; in relation to the LOGOS, or WORD in particular, and the Doctrine of the Trinity in general*, in Two Parts (1700).
[53] A. Kincaid and J. Bell (eds.), *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Plato* (Edinburgh and London, 1760).
[54] Andre Dacier, *The Works of Plato Abridg'd*, trans. by 'several hands' (London, 1720). See Frank B. Evans III, 'Platonic Scholarship in Eighteenth-Century England', *Modern Philology* 41, no. 2 (November, 1943), p.104.
[55] Evans, 'Platonic Scholarship in Eighteenth-Century England', p.105.
[56] Ibid., pp.108-110.

it.[57] Apart from an extremely brief and far from 'unveiled' abstract provided in *Platonism Unveiled*,[58] the *Symposium* (or *Banquet* as it was often entitled) featured in none of the above, save for the Bipont Edition.

The first English translation of the dialogue was produced by Floyer Sydenham (1710-1787) in 1761. Sydenham's intention had been to translate and publish all of Plato's works together. Hoping to attract sponsorship for the project, in 1759 he published *A Synopsis or General View of the Works by Plato,* alongside *Proposals for Printing by Subscription*. The public response was disappointing and few subscriptions were sold. A relatively positive review of Sydenham's translation published in the *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* in 1762, asserted matter-of-factly that, 'to say the whole in one word, Plato is unfashionable. There have been few, it is thought if any Platonic Lovers; and we may venture to say, that the number of Platonic Readers is now very inconsiderable.'[59] And the reason for this was quite clear. Describing the dialogue as Plato's 'most beautiful and perfect' work, Sydenham acknowledged that the philosopher's lack of popularity in England could be blamed on his obscure style and his not-so-obscure references to male same-sex love as well as heterosexual lasciviousness. In 1794 the gossip magazine, *Bon Ton,* printed a rather salacious synopsis of Aristophanes' tale, taking evident delight in the lurid ways in which the example of Platonic heterosexual love might be used:

> Adulterers may draw an excuse from hence, by pleading the search which they are bound to follow; the married, after having been mistaken; the unmarried, to prevent mistakes.[60]

[57] Ibid., p.106.
[58] *Platonism Unveiled, or an Essay concerning the Opinions of Plato* (Edinburgh and London, 1760), pp.145-149.
[59] 'The banquet. A Dialogue of Plato concerning Love. The First Part', *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal*, vol. 26 (London, March 1762), p.196.
[60] *The Bon Ton Magazine; or Microscope of Fashion and Folly* (London, January 1794), p.419.

It was such issues that impeded the transmission of Plato's profound insights into human nature. As the critic in the *Monthly Review* pointed out: 'the Dialogue is not altogether conducted in a manner suitable to the modern taste…it is not interspersed with those warm images, which quicken the pulse'.[61] 'Modern taste' was of course a euphemism for heterosexual love. In referring to 'taste', the critic not only alludes to the worrying references to sodomy but to the belittling of heterosexual love in Aristophanes' 'Buffoon-like' tale. 'Aristophanes treats of love,' the reviewer explained, 'as other writers of comedy do, taking it only in the grossest sense of the word, as it means the passion common to man with all brute animals.'[62] If Sydenham had hoped to inspire a Platonic revival in England, it had come to little. With dwindling financial reserves, by 1780 Sydenham had completed just nine of Plato's dialogues, which were published largely at his own expense and sold by friendly and sympathetic booksellers who placed their own reputations and livelihoods on the line to do so. Mill later recalled how an English bookseller's insolvency was blamed in part on his 'excellent edition of Plato' failing to sell.[63] With the cultural climate as it was, Sydenham's venture might have seemed something akin to madness. Sydenham is believed to have died impoverished in 1787.[64]

According to Vigus, by the end of the eighteenth century, the only people in England to openly bother with Plato were Rational Dissenters, 'hostile to what they perceived as the mystificatory effects of Platonism,' upon the Church and Christianity.[65] If, as Taylor argues a 'strong Platonist element was discernible in Unitarian thought' - supported by Martha

[61] 'The banquet. A Dialogue of Plato concerning Love. The First Part', p.196.
[62] Ibid., pp.197-198.
[63] John Stuart Mill, 'Notes on some of the more popular dialogues of Plato, No. I - The Protagoras', *Monthly Repository* (February 1834), p.89.
[64] See Evans, 'Platonic Scholarship in Eighteenth-Century England', pp.103-110; E.I. Carlyle and Rev. Anna Chahoud, 'Sydenham, Floyer (1710-1787)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 26/06/2017.
[65] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.13.

Zebrowski's observations of Price's Platonism[66] - and visible in Hartley's influential mid-eighteenth century work, *Observations of Man* (1749), [67] by the 1790s, this was evidently no longer the case. In keeping with Philp's image of an increasingly conservative Unitarianism, Price's Platonised Arianism might be contrasted with the increasingly hostile reception of Platonism by growing numbers of Socinians within Unitarianism guided by Price's younger friend Priestley.

Priestley was in fact one of the few English scholars at the time to study Plato in the Greek, with the intention of stripping Christianity of its Platonic and Trinitarian accretions, but unlike Price before him or Coleridge and others of a more heterodox bent, Priestley's investigations did not lead to a new-found appreciation of Platonism. Plato's egalitarian ideas left Priestley decidedly underwhelmed. 'How little must Plato have known of human nature and human life,' wrote Priestley, 'when he recommended a community of women in his republic, and an education for them the same with men and together with them, even so far as to exercise in the gymnasia, naked…Aristotle was the disciple of Plato, but he appears to have been greatly superior to him...'[68] Priestley's negative opinion was indicative not only of broader society but of the majority of his fellow-Unitarians, and it was an opinion that, arguably, would help to increase tensions between 'Unitarians proper', to use Gleadle's term,[69] and the heterodox radicals in their midst. Although Priestley held notably radical ideas, supporting the French Revolution at the beginning and calling for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts,[70] his views on sexual difference and patriarchy, as will be discussed

[66] Martha K. Zebrowski, 'Richard Price: British Platonist of the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55, No. 1 (January, 1994), pp.25-26, 31.
[67] See Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.110; David Hartley, *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (London, S. Richardson, 1749).
[68] Joseph Priestley, *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works*, vol. 17 (Hackney, 1820), pp.453, 459.
[69] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.4-6.
[70] See Robert E. Schofield, 'Priestley, Joseph (1733-1804)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 06/07/2018.

below, were noticeably more conventional, highlighting the problem of using 'radical' at this time as a homogenous catch-all term.

It was not until 1804 that a complete edition of Plato's works translated into English by Thomas Taylor (1758-1835) appeared on the market.[71] The edition included Sydenham's earlier translations. Unlike the Oxford-educated Sydenham, however, as the son of a non-conformist staymaker, Taylor's aptitude for and knowledge of Greek and Latin were acquired through brief admittance to the non-conformist school of St. Paul's in Staffordshire and Salters' Hall meeting-house in Sheerness.[72] Taylor was, however, largely self-taught and to many of his academic critics, it showed. Where one critic acknowledged that 'every scholar will speak [of Sydenham] with respect, and every man of taste with regard and fondness'. The same critic had this to say of Taylor: 'his translation of Plato is in every higher quality a lamentable contrast to the work of his predecessor Sydenham. It is written without spirit, without taste, without…even a suspicion of the lighter shades of language, and it is disfigured throughout with the unintelligible jargon of the Alexandrian school'.[73]

Writing in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1809, the political philosopher, utilitarian and father of John Stuart Mill, James Mill (1773-1836) attacked the English attitude to classical learning in general:

> None of the lettered nations of Europe, the French, the Germans, the Italians, are so badly supplied with translations, in their own language, of the prose classics. None of them have done so little even towards the purifying of the text of the antient [sic] authors.[74]

[71] Thomas Taylor, *The Works of Plato*, Five volumes (London, 1804).
[72] Andrew Louth, 'Taylor, Thomas (1758-1835)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 4/7/2018.
[73] William Lowndes, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Plato* (London, J. M'Creery, 1827), p.32-33. By Alexandrian, we might read Neoplatonic.
[74] James Mill, 'The Works of Plato viz. his Fifty-Five Dialogues, and Twelve Epistles, translated from the Greek', in *The Edinburgh Review* 14, no. 27 (April 1, 1809), p.188. Mill had been well-educated in the classics

Echoing the concerns of his father some twenty-five years later, John Stuart Mill stated of Plato that, 'of the great writers of antiquity, there is scarce one who, in this country at least, is not merely so little understood, but so little read.'[75] For some, however, the lack of interest was not helped by the poor quality of the translations available. James Mill went so far as to lay the blame for the moribund state of Platonism in England at the turn of the nineteenth century on Taylor:

> Instead of rescuing Plato from the injurious misapprehension, and inviting the youth of his country to that instruction which Cicero and Horace so highly prized, Mr Taylor has done, what in him lay, to confirm the misapprehension; and, by heaping absurdity more thick upon his author than before, to chase everybody from a task so nauseous as the study of him is thus made to appear.[76]

Touching upon the necessity of a good translation to aid cultural transmission and reception, in 1810, a year after Mill's scathing critique, Coleridge contended that Taylor could not have fully understood the 'System' that Plato taught:

> for had he done so, he must have understood the difficulties that oppose its reception, objections which immediately occur to men formed under notions so alien from it – Whereas he no where prepares the mind, no where shows himself in a state of Sympathy with the hesitating Examiner -.[77]

Coleridge who, from a young student at Christ's Hospital, had made Taylor's translations of Orpheus, Plotinus, and Proclus, his 'darling studies', and who owned a copy of Taylor's *Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus*, published in 1793, was nonetheless critical of Taylor's style and technique, describing it as, 'difficult Greek transmuted into

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and in Plato in Edinburgh. See Terence Ball, 'Mill, James (1773-1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 06/07/2018.

[75] John Stuart Mill, 'Notes on some of the more popular dialogues of Plato - The Protagoras', p.89.

[76] Mill, 'Works of Plato', p.192.

[77] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol. 3, 3935.

incomprehensible English'.[78] As late as 1834, Mill reminded readers of the *Monthly Repository* that, thirty years after publication, Taylor's translation was still the only complete version in English, and that 'full of faults, and often with difficulty understood even by those who can read the original.'[79]

Taylor's intention behind translating and publishing Plato's works in full was for some blatantly anti-Christian and polytheistic, earning him the epithet, 'English Pagan'.[80] While Shelley may have been attracted to this spiritual element initially, the 'unattractive invocation of a militant band of pagan Truth-lovers', Vigus argues, 'tends to indicate why Coleridge, Blake and others' lost any initial enthusiasm.[81] Where Taylor was concerned with mounting an attack on the doctrines of Christianity, others were concerned with using Plato to undermine ignorance and prejudice. Taylor's rather plodding translations and his reliance upon the later and intentionally unifying and mystical interpretations of Neoplatonists, most notably Proclus, did little to reveal Plato's original ideas and intentions. Nor did they help to reveal the 'utility' of the Socratic dialogues. As such, Taylor obscured what for Mill was one of the most important features of Plato's writings, 'that he affirms nothing; whereas the friends of Mr Taylor are the most desperately affirmative of all human beings.' Plato's objective was to 'refute' arbitrary principles of belief and 'expose the ignorance' of those sophists who would seek to encourage and to enflame 'the worst impressions of right and wrong, with regard both to public and to private life'.[82] In reading Dacier's abridged translations of the *Laches* and the *Protagoras,* Shelley had arrived at a similar conclusion, discerning as Wallace argues, a 'pattern in which a common assumption or definition was broken down under fierce questioning by Socrates, and all the participants in the dialogue

[78] James A. Notopoulos, 'Shelley and Thomas Taylor', in *PMLA* 51, no.2 (June, 1936), p.503.
[79] Mill, 'Notes on some of the more popular dialogues of Plato', p.91.
[80] Notopoulos, 'Shelley and Thomas Taylor', pp.508-509.
[81] Ibid., p.508; Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.28.
[82] Mill, 'Works of Plato', p.199

were left in a state of "aporia", or uncertainty about the original definition. No positive answer or alternative philosophical theory was suggested, but the error of existing definitions was revealed'.[83] Plato's original intention was, according to Mill, 'more calculated to sharpen the faculties; to render acute in discerning, and ingenious in exposing fallacies; to engender a love of mental exercise; and to elevate with the ambition of mental excellence'.[84] It was an opinion readily shared within this heterodox network. It was also perhaps the exposing of 'fallacies' that the authorities found most disconcerting and heterodox radicals most attractive. The suspicions that Plato encouraged radicalism, as touched upon by Vigus, are supported by Wallace's comments that in England Neoplatonism had come to be viewed as a 'kind of secret-society activity, equivalent to Rosicrucianism or Freemasonry': an underground society of radicals and revolutionaries.[85] As such, there were few in England, even amongst the devotees of the philosopher, such as Coleridge, who felt impelled to remedy this deficiency and help the 'hesitating Examiner'.

The next significant translation of Plato's Dialogues in full appeared in 1871, this time by the Oxford master of Balliol, Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893).[86] Oxford's introduction of Platonism into the curriculum had in part been influenced by a revival of interest in the Greek classics from the early nineteenth century, noticeable in leading public and grammar schools like Eton, Shrewsbury and Rugby.[87] Yet Jowett's introduction of Plato into the *Literae humaniores* at Oxford, and his translation of the dialogues into English were not carried out in pursuit of philosophical understanding, but rather, as Dowling explains, to protect religious

[83] Jennifer Wallace, 'Shelley, Plato and the political imagination', in Baldwin and Hutton (eds.), *Platonism and the English Imagination*, p.233.
[84] Mill, 'Works of Plato', p.199
[85] Wallace, 'Shelley, Plato and the political imagination', p.183.
[86] Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, 5 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1871).
[87] Wallace, *Shelley and Greece*, pp.8-9. Samuel Butler was headmaster of Shrewsbury School from 1798 to 1836. See J.H.C. Leach, 'Butler, Samuel (1774-1839)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 03/08/2018; Arnold was headmaster of Rugby School from 1827 to his death in 1842. See A.J.H. Reeve, 'Arnold, Thomas, (1795-1842)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 03/08/2018.

'truth' from the 'pious frauds and grotesque dogmatic encrustations maintained by popular [evangelical] religious hysteria', most notably the Oxford Movement.[88] Jowett wrote and rewrote his translations of the Dialogues until 'virtually all the various Platonic speakers, from Socrates to Aristophanes to Charmides, seem to be speaking in the recognizable accents…of the Authorized Version of the Bible'.[89] Rather than the spiritual transcendentalism present in the Platonism of the Oxford Movement, Jowett emphasised intellectual transcendentalism. Yet, in so far as transcendentalism was concerned, Jowett's interpretation differed little from those of Sydenham or Taylor. As Dowling notes, 'it remains a minor irony of the search for legitimating authority that Jowett and the Oxford liberals were deploying a transcendental Plato which the clerical party had once mobilized in its own defence.'[90]

The earthy sexuality in Plato's ideas identified by heterodox radicals was once again obscured. As Eugene O'Connor observes, 'Jowett's introduction to his translation of Plato's *Symposium* expressed prevalent Victorian, Edwardian, and even later attitudes…towards Greek homosexuality'. At its worst, the passion between men was to be 'dismissed with such condemnatory adjectives as "shameful", "immoral", and "indecent".[91] There is little if anything to separate Jowett's opinions on Greek love in the 1870s from those of Sydenham in the 1760s. 'We are still more surprised', wrote Jowett in the introduction to his first edition, 'to find that [Plato] is incited to take the first step in his upward progress…by the beauty of young men and boys, which was alone capable of inspiring the modern feeling of romance in the Greek mind'.[92] According to Dowling Jowett's translation in 1871 turned 'the vital intellectual procreancy of Plato's *Symposium*…into the merely carnal fecundity of the

[88] Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1996), p.70.
[89] Ibid., p.71.
[90] Ibid., p.69.
[91] Eugene O'Connor (ed.), *Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium: Plato on Homosexuality* (New York, Prometheus Books, 1991), p.11.
[92] Ibid., p.11.

Victorian marriage'.[93] If Jowett retained Plato's denigration of heterosexual love it was, as O'Connor suggests, to show that love between men was more beautiful and creative because 'altogether separated from the bodily appetites'.[94] Not only did Jowett's translation continue the tradition of transcendentalism in Platonic scholarship; it retained the patriarchal and homosocial bias as well. In this regard, Shelly's more earthly and earthy interpretation of the *Symposium* might be viewed as an aberration between earlier and later translations.

It would, of course, be misleading to suggest that this reflects a binary distinction between two competing interpretations of Platonism: between an orthodox Judeo-Christian Neoplatonism and a heterodox radical Platonism. As the experiences of Coleridge and Shelley both illustrate, knowledge of Platonism could stem from a variety of intellectual, philosophical and religious sources. What this resurgent interest in Platonism might indicate is, what Dowling describes as a 'search for legitimating authority'; between those who would use Plato's dialogue on love to endorse the patriarchal and masculinist status quo and those who would use it to challenge patriarchy and to promote egalitarian codes and methods of practice.

Heterosexual Uranianism

To my knowledge, no studies exist as yet on the presence of the concept of heterosexual Uranianism and certainly not within studies of heterodox radicals during the Romantic era. In recent years Uranianism has been well-documented in histories of homosexuality, and most recently by Todd. W. Reeser.[95] Focus, however, is almost exclusively on the mid to late nineteenth century and the emergence of male homosexual identity. When we look more

[93] Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, p.97.
[94] See Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892), p.535. See O'Connor (ed.), *Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium*, p.11.
[95] Dowling, *Hellenism & Homosexuality*; Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*; *John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) and Homosexuality: A Critical Edition of Sources* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Upchurch, *Before Wilde*; Janes, *Picturing the Closet*; Todd W. Reeser, *Setting Plato Straight: Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2016).

carefully at the earlier Platonised works of heterodox radicals and in particular at Shelley's translation of the *Symposium*, we start to note subtle yet significant distinctions between heterodox interpretations of the concept and the more traditional and indeed ancient Greek interpretation of Uranianism as higher love between men.

In the *Symposium*, Pausanias describes two distinct loves [180c-181e]: that of the heavenly Aphrodite (Urania) and that of the earthly Aphrodite (Pandemos). Pandemic love originates from the younger, less mature Aphrodite, and as such represents the reproductive, vulgar, lascivious and transient physical relationships between men and women who were formally a part of the androgynous 'double nature'. It is not altogether clear as to the type of love that emanates from the 'female' nature, but Aphrodite Urania – she who represents the mature and heavenly love – is reserved for those who were once a part of the 'male' nature: mature men and bearded youths. Bearded youths are those who have reached adulthood and therefore a degree of independent, intellectual maturity. These last are inspired by Uranian Love. The love of young boys is expressly forbidden because they are immature in body and in soul.[96] This mature form of love is referred to as 'higher' or 'intellectual' love and also as 'higher friendship', highlighting its cerebral rather than carnal nature. In this context, Uranianism is not possible within heterosexual relationships.

Emerging from Malthusian theories on population control, the scientific and medical categories of procreative 'heterosexual' normality as opposed to non-procreative 'homosexual' abnormality did not acquire their present forms in Europe until the late nineteenth century, and did not enter common parlance in England until the twentieth century.[97] Referring back to Doan's caveat on 'projecting current formulations

[96] See Plato, *Symposium*, translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), [180c-182a], pp.13-15.
[97] See Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861-1913* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.123.

retrospectively,'[98] there is a valid reason, however, for using 'heterosexual' to define a form of Uranianism that, while providing a clear distinction with its homosexual variant, maintained the fundamental principles of Uranianism, namely the combining of physical *and* intellectual love between men and women, but with the emphasis placed upon the compatibility of higher intellectual love.

The egalitarian notion of heterosexual Uranianism is present throughout the works of the people studied in this thesis and will become more apparent as we proceed. However, some of the most explicit references to heterosexual Uranianism can be found in the correspondence and works of a close circle of friends, self-styled 'The Athenians'.[99] Between 1815 and 1818, this small circle consisted of Shelley, Hunt, Hogg and Peacock - the leader of the group, and a friend of Thomas Taylor. According to James A. Notopoulos' description of the group, all believed passionately that Greek was the only cure for a world steeped in division, disease and barbarism.[100] It was Peacock, apparently, who initiated Shelley 'into the Platonic cult', encouraging the young poet to read Plato in the Greek and in particular the *Symposium*, which became one of the central and guiding texts of this tightknit group. Soon after reading the *Symposium* in July 1817, Peacock published, anonymously, his poem *Rhododaphne*, a Platonic allegory on Uranian versus Pandemic love.[101] Encouraged by Peacock, in August 1817, Shelley read the *Symposium* and shortly after that produced *Prince Athanase*, a poem very similar in theme to *Rhododaphne*.[102] Notable in both *Rhododaphne*

[98] See p.10.
[99] See William Godwin, *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1817); W.S. Scott (ed.), *The Athenians, being the Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson Hogg and his friends Thomas Love Peacock, Leigh Hunt, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Others* (London, Golden Cockerel Press, 1943).
[100] James A. Notopoulos, 'Shelley and the Symposium of Plato', *The Classical Weekly* 42, no. 7 (January 10th, 1949), p.98.
[101] Thomas Love Peacock, *Rhodadaphne: or The Thessalian Spell. A Poem* (London, T. Hookham, 1818). Peacock refers to 'Uranian Love, in the mythological philosophy of Plato', describing it as 'the deity or genius of pure mental passion for the good and the beautiful; and Pandemian Love, of ordinary sexual attachment'. See p.184. Peacock makes no reference to male homosexual love.
[102] Notopoulos, 'Shelley and the Symposium of Plato', p. 99.

and *Prince Athanase* are explicit and implicit references to heterosexual Uranian and Pandemic love. *Prince Athanase*, a poem on the unrequited search for ideal love and beauty remained unpublished in Shelley's lifetime but in a note appended to the poem published in a collection of her late husband's poetical works in 1839, Mary Shelley admitted that a preliminary sketch of the poem had been called 'Pandemos and Urania'.[103] We do not know why Shelley chose to revise the title but it may have been owing to the associations of Urania and Pandemos with Plato's dialogue concerning pederasty and lascivious heterosexuality. The figure of Urania as the muse of universal love featured again in Shelley's poetic elegy to the death of fellow poet John Keats, *Adonais*, published in 1821.

While the promotion of heterosexual love was, of course, hardly out of the ordinary at a time when homosexuality was illegal, the references to Uranian love as not only heterosexual but intellectual *and* physical are a noteworthy deviation from the desexualised representations in earlier and later translations and commentaries. An objection to this heterosexual Uranian love might be read in a particularly caustic review of Hunt's *The Florentine Lovers,* published in 1822. The review was printed in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in the same year. *The Florentine Lovers* tells the story of star-crossed lovers from two feuding families in Florence. Hunt's depiction of the love affair between Dianora and Ippolito recalls vividly the descriptions of love in the *Symposium*. While not referred to directly, it is clear to which of Plato's dialogues Hunt refers:

> There was a likeness, as sometimes happens, between the two lovers: and perhaps this was no mean help to their passion: for as we find painters often giving their own faces to their heroes, so the more excusable vanity of lovers delights to find that resemblance in

[103] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mrs Shelley (Philadelphia, Porter & Coates, 1839), p.224.

> one another, which Plato said was only the divorced half of the original human being rushing into communion with the other.[104]

While Hunt depicted the mutually passionate union as heterosexual; Hunt's reviewer interpreted both the allusions to Platonism and Hunt's description of the young man that 'by his lips' you might know that 'he could love well', as decidedly non-heterosexual. 'But is there not something effeminate', the reviewer asked, 'Cockneyish, and Sporus-like, in a male writer speaking so of male lips? If Leigh Hunt be indeed an unfortunate woman, disguised in yellow breeches, this slaver about lips may be excusable; but if he really be of the sex assumed, nothing can be more loathsome. We said there was something Platonic…in the Tale'.[105] Not only are the spectres of Platonic Uranianism and homosexual hermaphroditism present in the accusation but we might see in the joint allusion the prejudicial challenges faced by any man, and in particular a literary and artistic man, who wished to assume a more feminine or androgynous identity. Hunt was accused of being 'immoral, indecent, lascivious, and sensual', and labelled 'effeminate'.[106] In casting Hunt as 'effeminate', Dowling explains, *Blackwood's* were making a clear reference to the classical republican effeminatus (the emasculated Hermaphroditus) and to the familiar trope of civic debility.[107] The other later Athenian text in which Pandemic and Uranian loves were mentioned directly was in Peacock's *Crotchet Castle*, published in 1831 and highly critical of how time had done little to shift popular opinion of Plato and his dialogue on love. [108] The most vivid description of heterosexual Uranianism to emerge from this circle of nineteenth century 'Athenians' was Shelley's translation of the *Symposium*.

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[104] Henry Leigh Hunt, 'The Florentine Lovers', in Leigh Hunt, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Hazlitt (eds.) *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South* (London, John Hunt, 1822), pp.51-52.
[105] 'On the Cockney School. No. VII. Hunt's Art of Love'', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (December, 1822), p.775. 'Cockney', deriving from Middle English 'cocken-ei' or 'cock's egg' was the female product of a male fowl and was used not to identify something 'unnervingly outside all known categories of order, rank, or status…' See Dowling, *Hellenism & Homosexuality*, pp.16, 20.
[106] Ibid., pp.775-779. John Lockhart's essay is indicative of conservative opinion at the time.
[107] Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, p.15.
[108] Thomas Love Peacock, *Crotchet Castle* (London, T. Hookham, 1831).

But why might we describe Shelley's interpretation of Uranianism as heterosexual? What I wish to illustrate is that despite Shelley's less guarded references to male homosexuality and pederasty; there is in the language used and the structure and placing of the paragraphs, distinct from either Sydenham and Jowett, something that would point to a deliberate blurring of the lines between homosexual and heterosexual love. There is in other words an ambiguity in Shelley's translation that makes it more egalitarian. To illustrate this, it helps to compare Shelley's translation with that of Sydenham's earlier and Jowett's later translations. Of these three translations, Shelley's is the only one to mention Uranian and Pandemic love directly, perhaps indicating the anxiety felt by the other two over the pederastic and homosexual nature of classical Uranianism. Although the subject of Uranianism in the dialogue is first introduced by Pausanias, it is in the continuation of this subject in the more 'comic' tale of Aristophanes' that key differences can be discerned between the translations of Sydenham in 1761, Shelley in 1818 and Jowett in 1871. In order to demonstrate this fully, it is necessary to provide some extended extracts from each of the translations.

Let us consider Jowett's 1871 translation of Aristophanes' description of the divided humans searching for their other halves:

> So ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of man. Each of us when separated is but the indenture of a man, having one side only like a flat fish, and he is always looking for his other half. Men who are a section of that double mature which was once called androgynous are lascivious; adulterers are generally of this breed, and also adulterous and lascivious women: the women who are a section of the woman don't care for men, but have female attachments; the female companions are of this sort. But the men who are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being a piece of the man, they hang about him and embrace him and they are themselves the best of boys and youths, because they have the most manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are

> shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and they embrace that which is like them.[109]

Jowett's next sentence would seem to confirm that his form of Hellenism was steeped in the chaste and intellectual pederasty of the Oxford tutorial system, in which the older and wiser [Oxford] tutor dispenses loving wisdom to his younger protégé:

> And when they reach manhood they are lovers of youth, and are not naturally inclined to marry or beget children, which they do, if at all, only in obedience to the law, but they are satisfied if they may be allowed to live unwedded; and such a nature is prone to love and ready to return love, always embracing that which is akin to him.[110]

The references to pederasty are more than apparent in Jowett's translation. It is clear also that the practice is between men and male youths only. But let us compare this now with Sydenham's translation almost a century before and in particular his description of male love:

> As many Men, accordingly, as are Sections of that Double Form, called the Hermaphrodite, are Lovers of Women: and of this Species are the Multitude of Rakes. So, on the other hand, as many Women, as are addicted to the Love of Men, are sprung from the same Amphibious Race.[111] But Such Women, as are Sections of the Female Form, are not much inclined to Men; their Affections tend rather to their own Sex: and of this Kind are the Sapphic Lovers. Men, in like manner, Such as are Sections of the Male Form, follow the Males: and whilst they are Children, being originally fragments of Men, 'tis Men they love, and 'tis in Mens [sic] Company and Caresses they are most delighted. Those Children, and those Youths, who are of this Sort, are the Best, as being the most Manly in their Temper and Disposition. Some People, I know, say, they are shameless and impudent: But in this they wrong them: For it is not Impudence and Want of Modesty, but 'tis Manly Assurance, with a Manly Temper and Turn of Mind, by

[109] Jowett, 'Symposium', [191d-192], pp.123-124.
[110] Ibid., pp.561-562.
[111] A reference quite possibly to the amphibious nymph, Salmacis, in Ovid's *Metamorphases*.

> which they are led to associate with Those whom they resemble…For only Boys of this Manly Kind, when they arrive at the Age of Maturity, apply themselves to Political Affairs: and as they advance farther in the Age of Manhood, they delight to encourage and forward the Youth of their own Sex in Manly Studys [sic] and Employments, but have naturally no inclination to marry and beget Children: they do it only in Conformity to the Laws, and would chuse [sic] to live unmarried, in a State of Friendship. Such Persons as these are indeed by Nature formed for Friendship solely, and to embrace always whatever is Congenial with Themselves.[112]

As in Jowett's later translation, the heterophobic bias is clear; the love between men and women is purely sensual. The earthy sexuality very much present in the description of Uranianism in Waterfield's twentieth-century translation is in Sydenham's and Jowett's translation utterly absent.[113] For the latter two, Uranianism represents the chaste and higher friendship between men, emphasising the superiority of male homosociality over heterosexual and female relationships. In this regard, both representations of male ideal friendship follow the transcendental line developed by Neoplatonists. It is also interesting to note, that as a pupil and later a fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, Sydenham, like Jowett, pursued the life of a bachelor.[114] But let us now turn to Shelley – an Oxford scholar himself – and to his interpretation of Aristophanes' speech:

> Those who are a section of what was formerly one man and woman, are lovers of the female sex, and most of the adulterers, and those women who fall in love with men and intrigue with them, belong to this species. Those women who are a section of what in its unity contained two women, are not much attracted by the male sex, but have their inclinations principally engaged by their own. And those who become adulteresses with female partners belong to this division. Those who are a section of what in the beginning was entirely male seek the society of males; and before they arrive at manhood, such

[112] Floyer Sydenham, *The Banquet, A Dialogue of Plato Concerning Love. The First Part* (London, H. Woodfall, 1761), pp.92-94.
[113] Waterfield, *Symposium*, [191e], p.28.
[114] Carlyle and Chahoud, 'Sydenham, Floyer (1710-1787)'.

> being portions of what was masculine, are delighted with the intercourse and familiarity of men. These are the youths who, being of a more manly nature, promise the fairest harvest of future excellence. Some attach to them the reproach of libertinism and immodesty, but without justice, for they do not seek an intercourse with men from any immodesty but form the impulses of a generous, aspiring and manly nature. A great proof of which is that such alone ever attain to political power.[115]

While Shelley softens and chastens the Uranian 'intercourse' between men – using the word 'love' only to refer to heterosexual and female homosexual relationships – he softens to the point of erasing the heterophobia present not only in Sydenham's and Jowett's translations but in the original Platonic dialogue as well. 'Licentious' is nowhere to be seen. The lack of differentiation between male and female love might also be said to raise the two sexes in accordance with one another, thus raising heterosexual love level with that of male homosexual love.

Shelley's translation is distinct not only in style and language but in structure and layout as well. Take for instance section [192b/c]. Where there is no termination in Jowett's paragraph on male Uranianism at this point, Shelley starts a new paragraph: 'such as I have described is ever an affectionate lover and a faithful friend, delighting in that which is in conformity with his own nature'.[116] While the decision could have been made purely for stylistic reasons – the masculine gender is still used - the physical space would seem to suggest a greater intellectual distance between the opinions voiced in the preceding paragraph. Having softened significantly the heterophobic bias of the original dialogue, by starting a new paragraph, Shelley would also appear to suggest that the 'affectionate lover' and 'faithful friend' refers to heterosexual as well as homosexual and indeed homosocial love. For Jowett, the 'affectionate lover and faithful friend' clearly refers to love that exists between men.

[115] Shelley, *The Symposium of Plato: The Shelley Translation*, ed. by David K. O'Connor (South Bend, Indiana, St. Augustine's Press, 2002), pp.29-30.
[116] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, [192b], p.30.

If Shelley's translation fails to extricate itself entirely from a male-centric bias, it is yet possible to see the broadly liberating socio-political purpose expressed in Shelley's interpretation and too the veiled references throughout this dialogue to an egalitarian heterosocial and heterosexual society. Aristophanes' tale of the androgynes helps, arguably, to question the notion of innate binary differences between men and women, by highlighting the variation that exists in the realms between the two sexual and gender extremes. In so far as heterosexual and homosexual loves are concerned in the *Symposium*, O'Connor is right to argue that the dialogue not only 'oscillates between low and high' love, but the higher love reveals 'the potentialities of the low, and lets the low interrogate the pretensions of the high.'[117] For Shelley, Richard Holmes argues, the *Symposium* was the nearest thing to a Bible, offering a new code of moral conduct.[118]

In making Plato's descriptions of Uranianism more heterosexual, Shelley would appear to raise heterosexual love parallel to that of male homosocial friendship. Shelley's preface on Greek manners, which he wrote shortly after completing the translation, lends this heterosexual interpretation some support, especially when we read again his admonition of the barbarous and 'invidious distinction of human kind, as a class of beings [of] intellectual nature, into two sexes'.[119] It is interesting to note that in the edited collection of Shelley's works, published by Mary Shelley in 1840, Shelley's reference to the 'invidious distinction' is missing in what is described inaccurately as an 'unfinished' fragment.[120] Not only is Shelley's discussion on Greek love completely omitted but so too is his allusion to psycho-sexual equality. The complete version of Shelley's essay on Greek manners would not be

[117] Ibid., p.xvi.
[118] Holmes, *Shelley the Pursuit*, p.438.
[119] See Shelley, *Plato's Banquet Translated from the Greek*, p.16.
[120] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'On the Literature, the Arts, and the Manners of the Athenians - A fragment', in Mary Shelley (ed.), *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and fragments*, vol. 1 (London, Edward Moxon, 1840).

printed until 1931 by Roger Ingpen and even then it was for private circulation only.[121] That Shelley intended heterosexual love to be understood is evident perhaps in Mary Shelley's response to advice given by Hunt shortly before publishing a highly abridged version of the *Symposium* in 1840. Hunt's letter would not appear to have survived but it is clear from Mary's rather dejected response that Hunt advised her to replace all references to 'love' with 'friendship':

> You have puzzled me much. What you said convinced me. You said: "Do as Mills, who has just phrased it so that the common reader will think common love is meant - the learned alone will know what is meant." Accordingly I read the Phaedrus and found less of a veil even than I expected - thus I was emboldened to leave it so that *our sort of civilized love* should be understood - Now you change all this back into friendship - which makes the difficulty as great as ever. I wished in every way to preserve as many of Shelley's own words as possible - and I was glad to do so under the new idea which you imparted - but your alterations puzzle me mightily - I do not like not to abide by them - yet they destroy your own argument that different sexes would be understood and thus all is in confusion. Accordingly I have left some and not others - where you seemed very vehement - and your p.192 I have altered and omitted as you mention - but I could not bring myself to leave the word love out entirely from a treatise on Love.'[122]

We do not know why Hunt advised as he did, but his own experience at the hands of *Blackwood's* might provide some explanation. Some twenty years after *Blackwood's* attack on Hunt, it is important to remember that social unrest across Britain and the Continent was still apparent. Thus, with regards to Shelley's *Symposium*, even in 1840 while the well-educated and those familiar with Plato may well have understood Shelley's nuanced allusions to a 'civilised love'; the majority would not, as was plainly illustrated by Peacock in *Crotchet Castle* nine years earlier. Shelley was more than aware of the seriousness of the matter and

[121] For the rest of the fragment see, Shelley, *Plato's Banquet Translated from the Greek*, pp.12-26.
[122] Mary Shelley Wollstonecraft, 'Letter 508. To Leigh Hunt (October 1839)', in Frederick L. Jones (ed.), *The Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, vol. 1 (Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1944). Italics my own.

the risks entailed. Writing to Peacock in 1818 about his 'Discourse on the manners of the ancient Greeks', Shelley admitted that the:

> subject [of Uranian love] [was] to be handled with that delicate caution which either I cannot or I will not practise in other matters, but which here I acknowledge to be necessary. Not that I have any serious thought of publishing either this discourse or the *Symposium*, at least till I return to England, when we may discuss the propriety of it. [123]

Of course Shelley was no stranger to controversy, which makes his decision not to publish all the more noteworthy. In 1811 Shelley had been expelled from University College, Oxford for refusing to disavow his co-authorship of *The Necessity of Atheism*.[124] He showed no qualms while in Ireland in printing and distributing pamphlets on Irish Catholic emancipation, nor handing out copies of *A Declaration of Rights*. And although Shelley decided not to publish, the seventy copies of *Queen Mab* with its radical denunciation of marriage, which he distributed amongst friends and associates, were quickly pirated and widely read, with the suggestion that Shelley was more than comfortable with this. That Shelley should decide not to publish the *Symposium,* nor too his preface on Greek manners, and should choose instead to restrict circulation to close friends and family is informative. As we will see in chapter three, Barbauld was driven by similar concerns for protecting the limits of private circulation, fearing that her radical ideas might fall into unsympathetic hands.[125]

The apparent conflict in the *Symposium* between sensual and intellectual love in the tale of the androgynes was reconciled and liberated through Uranianism and the combining of lower (sensual) love with higher (intellectual) love, as described by Diotima, the one female and balancing voice in Plato's dialogue. But, if Aristophanes' tale of androgynous beings was

[123] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley', vol. 2 in Frederick L. Jones (ed.), *Shelley in Italy* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1964), p.29.
[124] See O'Neil, 'Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792-1822)'.
[125] See Rachel Hetty Trethewey, 'The Progressive Ideas of Anna Letitia Barbauld' (PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2013), pp.194-195.

described by some as a comedy of the grotesque,[126] and Pausanias' speech on Uranianism as licentious and immoral, Socrates' discussion with Diotima on love pointed to something far more profound. It was in many ways an extension of the themes discussed in both previous speeches but rather than placing the focus of happiness and completeness upon an external other, Diotima's opinions raised the possibility of androgynous self-completion.[127] In other words, the individual might develop an androgynous or whole mind through knowledge and education. Heterodox radicals looked to Plato, distinct from Aristotle and the Greek play-writes, poets and dramatists – who maintained a strict sexual hierarchy - as someone who offered a more egalitarian view of humanity. The all-male gathering in Plato's dialogue, which complied with Athenian convention, was complicated by the, albeit absent, presence of a rational, educated woman. Moving beyond the traditional role of wife or harlot to that of intellectual equal, Diotima acted as mentor and advisor. On issues of gender, Angela Hobbs describes Plato's position as 'deliberately ambivalent…', thus allowing for the potential reimagining of sexual identity and the shifting of power relations between and within the sexes, and, it might be added, between and within the private and public spheres.[128] The theme of gender ambiguity first presented in Aristophanes' 'comic' tale, continues in a more serious and subtle vein through the rest of the dialogue. Plato may not have defied convention entirely by including women in person, but the unconventional act of female representation put forward a positive and revolutionary ideal to which society might aspire. For C. J. Swearingen, the *Symposium* represents a positive reworking of the feminine through 'diverse representations of non-hierarchical, reciprocal, non-possessive practices of love and

[126] Anon, 'The Banquet: A Dialogue of Plato concerning Love. The First Part', *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* (London, 1762), pp.197-198. A review of Sydenham's translation.
[127] This is apparent in Shelley's original translation [207d-208b]. See Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, pp.52-53.
[128] Angela Hobbs, 'Female Imagery in Plato', in Lesher, J.H., Nails, Debra and Sheffield, Frisbee C.C. (eds.), *Plato's Symposium: issues in interpretation and reception* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006), p.266. Hobbs refers to the Socratic theory of gender-neutrality in the *Meno* and in the *Republic*: 'beyond the roles men and women play in biological reproduction, there are no essentially male and female activities, and hence no essentially male and female excellences.'

discourse.'[129] Plato can, she argues, be seen as a 'renegade preserver and protector of the feminine as it gradually succumbed to suppression and denigration,' in the ancient world. [130] It can likewise be argued that 'Renegade' heterodox radicals, fearful of increased sexual segregation, looked to Plato to offer the 'feminine' in their own society just such protection and endorsement. Arguably, by extending the remit of femininity, the restrictions and responsibilities placed upon masculinity would be relaxed and the increasing stigma attached to notions of effeminacy within sensitive heterosexual men lessened. As too would the accusations of abnormality and inversion heaped upon women who exhibited masculine traits.

The inaccuracies of Shelley's translation have been noted by many. Despite using the Bipont edition, Shelley depended significantly upon Ficino's Latin and Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato's dialogue.[131] He worked at speed, taking, we are told, only ten days to translate the dialogue and refusing to use a lexicon, guessing at words and phrases that weren't immediately clear. And yet, despite the noted insufficiencies, as both Notopoulos and Stephanie Nelson highlight, the translation was a 'masterpiece'. The poetic beauty and subtlety of Shelley's translation of the *Symposium* surpasses that of anything before or after. But, if by 1817 Shelley had, according to Mary Shelley, become a devoted Platonist, why rely on the Neoplatonic Latin interpretation of Ficino? Why not translate from the Greek and why did Shelley translate the piece so quickly? On this, Nelson's theory is most enlightening. She argues that Shelley was 'deeply invested in a particular interpretation of the dialogue' and one that 'does not seem to have been Plato's'. As demonstrated by earlier and later translations of Plato's works, altering the text to suit a certain interpretation was not unusual.

[129] C. J. Swearingen, 'Plato's Feminine: Appropriation, Impersonation, and Metaphorical Polemic', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 22, no.1 (Winter, 1992), p.111.
[130] Ibid., p.120.
[131] Stephanie Nelson, 'Shelley and Plato's Symposium: the poet's revenge', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 14, No. 1/2 (Summer 2007), p.101. George Burgess, who later translated Plato's works in full, accused Shelley of never looking 'beyond the Latin of Ficinus'. George Burgess, *The Works of Plato: A New and Literal Version*, vol. 3 (London, Henry. G. Bohn, 1859), p.472.

Although Shelley was particularly taken with the transcendental spirituality of the Neoplatonic interpretation of the dialogue, believing, as Nelson points out, in 'the eternal, the infinite, and the one', Shelley was keen that the transcendent should be balanced by the 'earthy', in order to resonate more fully in the present.[132] Though Mary Shelley pointed to her husband's love of the ideal and the infinite, possibly attempting, herself, to play down the socio-political implications of the unabridged version of the translation, Shelley had admitted to Godwin in an introductory letter some five years earlier in 1812 that, while prior to reading *Political Justice*, he had 'existed in an ideal world', afterwards he discovered that 'in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of Reason. I beheld in short that I had duties to perform'.[133] If poetry and language were important they were so as vehicles for ideas and ideas with socio-political intent. Just as Godwin's *Political Justice* promoted human perfectibility, with evident allusions to Platonised notions of intellectual growth cultivated through reason and guided by knowledge of the good,[134] Shelley's original translation of Plato's *Symposium* not only highlights the true source of western morality but might be viewed as a manual in which mutual love and friendship are shown to be the guiding forces behind human perfectibility. It is, in other words, a work that, perhaps more so than Godwin's *Political Justice*, seeks to fuse the spiritual with the material and the secular and in a way that does not seek to hide or ignore all of nature's messy ambiguities. As Nelson points out, where the Bipont Edition argued that Plato intended in the *Symposium* to condemn homosexuality – a position adopted later by Jowett and indeed implied by Sydenham - Shelley does no such thing. Instead he argues in his preface that it was the degradation of women in Greece that forced men to turn to other men, suggesting that Plato did not condemn the practice itself but the culture that

[132] Nelson, 'Shelley and Plato's Symposium', p.105.
[133] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poems and Prose*, edited by Timothy Webb (London and Vermont, Everyman, 1995), p.456.
[134] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.xvii.

made the practice necessary.[135] Nelson does not expand on this point, but noting the heterosexual turn of Shelley's translation we might argue that rather than simply blaming the cultural practices of the classical world, Shelley uses the dialogue not only to shine a critical light upon the cultural practices of his own society but to present a more egalitarian alternative. Some have argued that Shelley's translation is merely a promotion of the patriarchal defence of heterosexuality, but this is to ignore the ways in which Shelley's translation seems to undermine the supremacy of patriarchy by challenging orthodox views on masculine superiority.

Across popular novels, discourses and social commentaries during the Romantic era and for some time after, it was common, if not universally held, for the friendship between men – and certainly those of the classically-educated elite – to be perceived as rational and civilising in a way that heterosocial, and indeed homosocial female, friendship, was not. From the late eighteenth century, the growing separation of the male working environment from the female domestic sphere, made this gendered distinction all the more noticeable, certainly as the earlier encouragement of gentlemanly politeness and heterosocial interaction in spas and salons gave way to the more male-dominated and less 'polite' business of the public sphere during the nineteenth century.[136] It was, however, the renewed appreciation of the merits of male homosocial friendship that would later be endorsed and valorised at Oxford through Jowett's translation of the *Symposium*. In 1835 an anonymous commentator in *Woman: As she is, and as she should be*, explained:

> As a sex towards whom we are naturally and involuntarily drawn, Woman is doubtless most captivating; yet man may be, as an individual, more estimable. One sex we love, -

[135] Nelson, 'Shelley and Plato's Symposium', p.105, ft. 13.
[136] See Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity', pp.455-472.

> esteem remains for the other; and perhaps the latter is a purer and nobler attachment of the two. [137]

Nor was this opinion the preserve of men only. In 1806, the evangelical and conservative writer and poet, Jane West (1758-1852), argued that 'the connexions formed by schoolgirls rarely ripen into valuable friendships'.[138]

In rejecting past scholarly consensus that Greek art and literature was used during the Romantic era as an 'unproblematic endorsement of the nation's concerns and values', Wallace in her excellent study *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism*, argues that works such as Shelley's reveal the 'detailed process of selection and appropriation' in individual writers.[139] Shelley's idiosyncratic translation was, according to Wallace, part of a pioneering and radical understanding of Greece that emanated from 'outside the standard cultural expectations and institutional values'.[140] Wallace does not expand upon this comment, but in this thesis I hope to raise awareness of this 'outside' heterodox network to which Shelley was an important member. As a key, if perhaps not atypical, figure within this heterodox community, the studies of Shelley by Nelson and Wallace help to reveal a man less interested with the niceties of translation, dropping interjections as Nelson observes, and collapsing several exchanges into one. Of course, the translations of Sydenham and Jowett were themselves far from faithful copies of the original, both presenting a more transcendental and spiritual picture of Plato's dialogue on love. But perhaps unlike Sydenham, whose intentions were to provide England with an English translation of Plato's works, as Nelson points out quite rightly, Shelley's avoidance of the literal translation was intentional. Shelley, according to Nelson, was acutely aware of the 'act of transmission', a

[137] Anon, *Woman: As she is, and as she should be*, vol. 2 (London, 1835), pp.84-88.
[138] Jane West, *Letters to a Young Lady* (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806), p.420.
[139] Wallace, *Shelley and Greece*, p.3.
[140] Ibid., p.9.

skill that might be credited to Jowett later on.[141] Word for word translation, where possible, can rob the original text of its beauty, its subtlety and, more importantly, its meaning. For Shelley, the words themselves were not important; it was the ideas behind them that mattered. As a member of this heterodox radical community, Shelley's translation of Plato's *Symposium* was motivated by social reform. And yet, as Shelley and others such as Coleridge appreciated only too well, it was the cultural baggage accompanying certain 'words' such as hermaphrodite, androgyny and pederasty that made the transmission of that Platonic heterosexual eros during the Romantic era so difficult and so risky.

Any study of androgyny during the Romantic era needs to be cognisant of the difficulties attending the reception of Platonism at this time and of the significant risks faced by individuals, and in particular men, who exhibited any sympathy for the cultural ideas and practices revealed in the *Symposium*. In referring to the 'hesitating Examiner', Coleridge could not have been ignorant of the sorts of 'difficulties' that opposed the easy reception of Platonism in England and the issues concerning homosexuality and more precisely pederasty. Not only was Platonism associated with an esoteric and irrational mysticism, it was associated, more worryingly, with sexual deviancy and immorality. Important studies on male homosexuality and sodomy in this period by Charles Upchurch and Dominic Janes are particularly enlightening.[142] More than reputation could be at stake for any man accused of, or associated with, 'unnatural' acts at this time. The lack of any direct reference to the *Symposium* made by Coleridge and his ambivalence towards androgyny and sexual character, especially his own, is perhaps understandable. Shelley was more than aware of the risks involved in producing an accurate and sympathetic translation of Plato's dialogue on love. 'The laws of modern composition,' he wrote, 'scarcely permit a modest writer to investigate

[141] Nelson, 'Shelley and Plato's Symposium', p.103.
[142] Dominic Janes, *Picturing the Closet: Male Secrecy and Homosexual Visibility in Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015); Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex between Men in Britain's Age of Reform* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 2009).

the subject with philosophical accuracy.'[143] Direct and unguarded references to androgyny might be linked to knowledge of Plato's dialogue on love and open study of the dialogue, as Shelley implied, with its unveiled references to homosexuality and pederasty could be tantamount, for some, to acknowledging their own perverted and immoral state.

The introduction of the Obscene Publications Acts from 1857, which provided for the seizing and potential destruction of any works thought obscene, would affect the study and translation of Plato's dialogue on love well into the twentieth century. Roger Ingpen's decision in 1931 to publish Shelley's translation of the *Symposium* for 'private circulation only' is evidence of this. The criminality of male same-sex relationships at the time meant, of course, that the *Symposium* would be placed automatically in that category. The term 'homosexual', coined in the 1860s, would have to wait until the 1960s to be included in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.[144] And although homosexuality in England was legalised (with certain conditions) in 1967, it is only in the last thirty years or so that public opinion has shifted sufficiently to allow for the *Symposium* to be studied openly.[145]

The Hermaphrodite as the Dual-Sexed figure of Chaos and Inequality

If the most famous reference to androgyny was to be found in Aristophanes' tale in the *Symposium*, the most famous example of the hermaphrodite, and the source of its name, was to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the tale of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. Writing some three hundred years after Plato, the Roman poet Ovid (43BC–17/18AD) was the first to recount the myth of Hermaphroditus. While bathing, the Naiad nymph, Salmacis, falls in love with a beautiful young man, Hermaphroditus. Hermaphroditus rejects the nymph, but unable to contemplate life without him, Salmacis prays to the Gods that their bodies be eternally

[143] Shelley, *Plato's Banquet Translated from the Greek, A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks*, p.15.
[144] Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, p.277.
[145] For public opinion on homosexuality from the late nineteenth century, see Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*.

united and her prayers are duly answered. With his limbs preternaturally softened, Hermaphroditus becomes the God of hermaphrodites and effeminate men. This is no tale of human perfectibility gained through the union of perfectly-matched partners. Instead it is one of rejection and lust; of female aggression and inversion and of male weakness and emasculation. In many ways it reflects the Neoplatonic descriptions of generative conflict and sexual inequality. Through the popularity of Ovid's tale, the hermaphrodite became synonymous with lust, illicit desire and passive male homosexuality. Ovid's story of the dual-sexed hermaphrodite of course reflects the influence of an already well-established and complex mix of classical sources, seen most obviously in his use of the Greek name Hermaphroditus, after the Greek Gods, Hermes and Aphrodite, who were parents of the effeminate God. Where Plato's tale of androgyny differs crucially from Ovid's and indeed from many later Neoplatonic interpretations of androgyny, is in the essentially equal nature of the union of the androgynes.

Luc Brisson's fascinating study of sexual ambivalence in Graeco-Roman antiquity highlights the marked distinction between the condemnation and rejection of duel-sexed beings in real life and the presentation of duel-sexuality as the 'archetype' or 'principle' of primordial being. This ancient paradox is acknowledged in Aristophanes' tale of the androgynes: 'The androgynous sex, both in appearance and in name, was common both to male and female; its name alone remains, which labours under a reproach'.[146] Yet, as Brisson notes, if this primordial being depicted by Plato and later Neoplatonists represented the reconciliation of contraries, it could also in certain instances represent an intermediate realm in which indeterminacy produced chaos.[147] Hermaphroditus was a symbol of chaos. A return to the intermediate state represented a return to chaos and a chaos marked by sexual incontinence and inversion. According to Brisson, it was Ovid who first established the 'links between

[146] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, pp.26-27.
[147] Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, pp.77-78.

dual sexuality and masculine homosexuality of the passive kind'.[148] However, in the *Symposium*, homosexuality is not a deviation from heterosexuality but its natural equal, because both the man/man and the woman/woman couples are as original as the man/woman and woman/man couples. Where Aristophanes' androgyne started as one being and was divided into two, thus recalling the division of Adam and Eve in Genesis, the hermaphrodite started as two separate beings and was fused into one. The androgyne represented natural and primordial fusion, while the hermaphrodite represented unnatural fusion and a fusion that militated, ultimately, against evolutionary progress. For Weil, Ovid's hermaphrodite 'embodies the fallen state' because it represents the fall from sexual clarity into sexual confusion. Where Aristophanes' androgyne represents a symbol of psychological wholeness and unity, the hermaphrodite represents a physical and rapacious sexuality and one in which masculine superiority is overwhelmed and weakened by feminine lust and eroticism. Yet, the feminine, represented by Salmacis is subsumed in body and name, her existence thereafter visible only in the effeminacy of Hermaphroditus. It is for this reason that Weil describes Hermaphroditus as, 'but half a man'. Thus for Weil, the hermaphrodite represents the chaos of a world where sexual difference and hierarchy are not protected.[149] In the divided Platonic androgyne, despite the necessity for the introduction of sexual attraction for purposes of reproduction, which brings with it the potential for rejection and chaos, true unity is possible only through recognition of the 'good', for as Diotima explains: 'It is asserted by some, that they love, who are seeking the lost half of their divided being. But I assert, that Love is neither the love of half or of the whole, unless, my friend, it meets with that which is good [205e].'[150] True love is based on recognition and complementarity and not, as in the case of Hermaphroditus, upon the instinctive and animalistic forces of carnal lust.

[148] Ibid., p.42.
[149] Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*, pp.18-19.
[150] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, p.49.

Yet, for all its associations with the cosmological androgyne, the description of androgyny offered by Aristophanes' ran counter to later Western and particularly Judeo-Christian ideals of heterosexuality. Although heterosexuality and homosexuality are described as natural, there is a clear 'heterophobic' bias in Aristophanes' tale,[151] as Benjamin Jowett's translation clearly illustrates: 'Men who are a section of that double nature which was once called androgynous are lascivious; adulterers are generally of this breed, and also adulterous and lascivious women'.[152] Male *and* female heterosexual love is presented as promiscuous, animalistic and perfunctory. Although still lascivious, the carnal element of heterosexual love in Ovid's tale is portrayed as quintessentially feminine, thus retaining the patriarchal dynamic. In other words, if heterosexual love becomes carnal and animalistic it is through the influence of the female and not the male.

The elision of androgyny with hermaphroditism

In ancient Greek and Roman society dual sexuality was either rejected or marginalised. Those unfortunate enough to be born with indeterminate sexuality were cast out or eliminated as monsters. But if dual sexuality was viewed as an abomination in real life, in ancient myth it had a quite different reputation. In myth dual sexuality represented the primordial origins of human beings – the archetype or pure form, of which humans were mere imperfect imitations or shadows.[153] The primordial androgyne existed prior to the division of asexual spirituality into two material sexes. Once divided into separate material and sexed bodies, roles and status were assigned for the continuation and generation of life. While the androgyne represented the birth of differentiation and generation, the hermaphrodite represented an indifferentiation that 'blocks all activity, hence all generation, and arrests everything in a

[151] Stevenson, *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime Revisited*, p.15.
[152] Jowett, 'Symposium', [191d], p.123. Instead of representing illicit acts, lascivious for Plato meant fondness for women (philogynaikes) or fondness for men (philandroi), which might suggest that sexual desire could be tempered by feelings of love. See p.123, ft.1-2. Shelley's use of 'love' in place of lascivious would suggest a more sympathetic translation. See [191d-e], *Symposium of Plato*, p.29. Unless stated, all references to Jowett's translation of the *Symposium* are to O'Connor's edition.
[153] Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, pp.2-3.

union that is permanent and so…sterile'.[154] To possess two sexes was, according to Brisson, to possess neither sex because generation could not happen.[155] The homosexual and in particular the 'passive' male homosexual as someone who does not generate new life, was associated with this dual-sexed figure. The hermaphrodite offered thus a potent image not only of male weakness and susceptibility but of civic degeneration.[156] Accusations of effeminacy and hermaphroditism could be deeply injurious to reputation and status. And the examples of circumspection and ambivalence towards issues of androgyny and psycho-sexual equality demonstrated by Romantics such as Coleridge need to be assessed with such concerns in mind.

The image of the hermaphrodite can be found time and again in criticisms of heterodox radicals and their ideas. At her trial in 1822, the image presented of Susannah Wright - the working-class radical and 'Zetetic supporter of Carlile – as a monstrous hermaphrodite by the editor of the government subsidised *New Times*, Dr Stoddert, is a clear if implicit example of how the hermaphrodite was used to undermine sexual and radical identities of both sexes. 'And yet here', wrote Stoddert, 'is not only one abandoned creature who has cast off all the distinctive shame and fear and decency of her sex, but her horrid mind had depraved the minds of others…and these monsters in female form stand forward with hardened visages…'[157] If the softened image of the male hermaphrodite is reversed, the image of a masculinised female hermaphroditism is apparent. It was, moreover, an image used increasingly to discredit intellectual women. A prime example of this is the poem *Unsex'd Females,* published in 1798 by the Anglican curate and writer, Richard Polwhele, in which Wollstonecraft and Barbauld, amongst others, were accused of sexual inversion.[158]

[154] Ibid., p.58.
[155] Ibid., pp.2-3.
[156] Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, pp.8-9.
[157] See McCalman, 'Females, Feminism and Free Love', p.10.
[158] Polwhele, Richard, *The Unsex'd Females* (London, 1798).

It could be that in England the hermaphrodite was simply the more recognisable term. A resident in London in 1750, the French surgeon, George Arnaud, argued that in scientific terms, the Greek term 'androgynes' was more 'significant, in that it is derived from the two words ἀνήρ, which denotes man, and γυνή, a woman.' However, in England the 'Hermaphrodite' was, he suggested, the more appropriate term, because 'more common and popular.'[159] What he meant by 'popular' is not clear but certainly its satirical value and its power to titillate and repulse seems beyond question. If scientists were interested in revealing the true nature of the hermaphrodite, its traditional mythical image and reputation were well-established. A combination of popular attraction and repulsion to the dual-sexed figure of the hermaphrodite is evident in the intentionally titillating depiction of the 'masculine female' in *Tractatus de Hermaphroditis: Or a Treatise of Hermaphrodites*. The hermaphroditism depicted at the end of the book was not physical but an example of a 'masculine' or 'lascivious female' interested in sexual relations with other women.[160] The anonymous author was clear that the term 'hermaphrodite' came from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and represented a 'mixture of both sexes, and in both incompleat':[161] The lack of Platonic scholarship in England may also have been a contributing factor but by the eighteenth century, the hermaphrodite in England had become a widely recognised and generic term used to describe any sexual state or act that deviated from the norm and was thus viewed as indeterminate.[162]

Responsible for introducing the study of physiology to England in the late 1830s at King's College, London, the Irish physician and physiologist Robert Todd's (1809-1860) exposition of hermaphroditism in the second volume of his *Cyclopaedia of Anatomy and Physiology*,

[159] George Arnaud, *A Dissertation on Hermaphrodites* (London, 1750), pp.13-14. Since the sixteenth century in England 'hermaphrodite' was a common term for same-sex relations. See Hayes, 'Blake's Androgynous Ego-Ideal', p.153.
[160] Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.320; *Tractatus de Hermaphroditis: Or a Treatise of Hermaphrodites* (London, 1718), p.ii.
[161] *Tractatus de Hermaphroditis*, pp.2,3.
[162] Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, p.229.

published in five volumes between 1835 and 1859, was thorough and comprehensive.[163] He divided the physical condition into two classes, 'spurious', in which the genital organs of one sex appeared like those of the opposite sex, and 'true', in which there was an actual 'blending together, upon the same individual, of more or fewer of both the male and female organs'. While recognising the condition in nature as physical, Todd suggests, that many of the hermaphroditic idols of Asian mythology could be linked to the deification of 'various monstrosities in man and, quadrupeds'. He notes the similarities also with the Jewish Talmud in which man's 'original progenitor was hermaphrodite' and he remarks upon Plato's 'Symposion [sic]' that 'the ancient nature…of men was not as it now is, but very different; for then he was androgynous both in form and name'. Todd was more than aware of the complex and ambivalent reputation of dual sexuality in the ancient world and of the influence of later Judaic-Christian and occult practices upon it which marked the physical state as abnormal. 'Probably from the licentious purposes alluded to by Justin Martyr,[164] or from the weak and imbecile character of hermaphrodite individuals, the word ανδρογυνος came in latter times to signify effeminate and luxurious. The ancient lexicographer Hesychius gives it this meaning; and Theodoret, in his Therap., speaks of Bacchus as being licentious, effeminate, and androgynous'.[165] Todd notes the early elision of hermaphroditism and androgyny as referring to a negative and weakened physical state of indeterminacy. The broader intellectual aspects of androgyny alluded to in Plato's *Symposium* seem to have been ignored. Indeed, Todd's reference to 'Justin Martyr' would suggest that he thought the elision was intentional. Todd refers to a long list of historical examples of hermaphroditic men and women who had excited medical and legal attention because of their physical indeterminacy

[163] Robert B. Todd, *The Cyclopaedia of Anatomy and Physiology*, vol. 2 (London, Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1839), pp.686-687.
[164] Justin Martyr (Saint Justin) was an early Christian apologist who claimed that many Greek philosophers were unknowing Christians and prophets of Christianity.
[165] Robert B. Todd, *The Cyclopaedia of Anatomy and Physiology*, vol. 2 (London, Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1839), ft., pp.686-687.

and the problems that this not only afforded their physical but their social status. But for Todd, as for the case studies raised in his *Cyclopaedia*, 'hermaphroditism' in all its forms represented examples of physical malformation or 'imperfect or abnormal development'. As a physiologist, Todd was interested in examining the physical condition and was not concerned with 'the merits or errors of these definitions and classifications…[nor of]…the propriety of the word itself'.[166] Nor was he concerned with any moral implications associated with the state. Thus the physical condition of hermaphroditism continued to excite interest not only amongst satirists and pornographers but increasingly amongst physiologists and anatomists. It also excited the interest of Shelley.

In his poem the *Witch of Atlas* (1820), Shelley chose to call the 'sexless creature' in it a hermaphrodite?[167] According to Jennifer Wallace, Shelley's hermaphrodite is "too disengaged, too lacking in vitality and motivation, too self-absorbed," to be the sensual and lascivious creature of Ovidian myth.[168] We might compare this with Sydenham's translation. Sydenham's decision to call the third sex in Aristophanes' tale 'hermaphrodite' as opposed to 'androgynous' makes sense given his particular interpretation and his quite culturally-typical objections to dual-sexed beings at the time of writing, as shown below:

> As many Men, accordingly, as are Sections of that Double Form, called the Hermaphrodite, are Lovers of Women: and of this Species are the Multitude of Rakes. So, on the other hand, as many Women, as are addicted to the Love of Men, are sprung from the same Amphibious Race.[169]

Shelley's decision is, however, less easy to fathom. By this time Shelley had translated the *Symposium*. Although we might see the lack of motivation and self-absorption as effeminate,

[166] Ibid., p.684.
[167] See Wallace, *Shelley and Greece*, p.145.
[168] Ibid., p.145.
[169] Sydenham, *Banquet*, pp.92-93. A reference possibly to the amphibious nymph, Salmacis, in Ovid's *Metamorphases*. Sydenham would appear aware of Ovid's tale and to be happy to conflate the two figures despite their very different physical origins.

there is neither wantonness nor promiscuity in the figure but instead a purity and self-contained perfection remarkably like that of the undivided androgyne:

> A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
> It seemed to have developed no defect
> Of either sex, yet all the grace of both, --
> In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;
> The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,
> The countenance was such as might select
> Some artist that his skill should never die,
> Imaging forth such perfect purity.[170]

If it lacks the stereotypical virtues of masculinity – action, heroism, aggression – its graceful and strong limbs, which exhibit no 'defect' would denote neither the weakness nor the effeminacy of Hermaphroditus, nor would its 'sexless' state denote the rampant sexual and predatory longing of Salmacis. Prior to writing the poem, Shelley had been moved by the serenity and purity of the marble statue of the *Sleeping Hermaphrodite* in the Borghese Palace in Rome.[171] Linda Woodbridge's study of women in the Renaissance reveals how the hermaphrodite was not universally condemned but could at times represent a positive allegory of love.[172] Hence, for Shelley, the Borghese Hermaphrodite might well have been interpreted as a symbol of purity. The early Judeo-Christian idea of Adam as hermaphroditic, officially denounced as heretical in the thirteenth century, lingered, according to Woodbridge, in several defences of women's rights during the Renaissance and thereafter.[173] But if the hermaphrodite was commandeered as evidence of Eve's equality with Adam, the dual-sexed being would continue to be used less positively in the case of men. As Woodbridge notes, the

[170] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'The Witch of Atlas (1820)', in T. Hutchinson (ed.), *Shelley's Poetical Works,* vol. 2 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.585-586. Published posthumously in 1824.
[171] Richard Holmes, *Shelley the Pursuit* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974), p.566.
[172] Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Brighton, Sussex, The Harvester Press Ltd., 1984), pp.140-141.
[173] Ibid., p.140.

fear of and contempt for physical androgyny and transvestism, stretching back to Greek culture, persisted into Renaissance Europe and beyond. 'Part of the ambivalence of androgyny comes', as Nancy Hayles explains, 'from a contrast between the symbolic and the concrete; what may be admired in the abstract becomes detestable when manifested in flesh'.[174] This is corroborated by Brisson's study of hermaphroditism in ancient Greece and Rome.[175] Through much of western history, the most common and prevailing interpretation of the hermaphrodite has been negative. Thus, Brown's suggestion that Shelley was motivated by a desire to shock is more than plausible.[176] As Michael O'Neil argues, in *The Necessity of Atheism*, Shelley 'went out of his way to provoke'.[177] Having opted for 'androgynous' in his earlier translation of the *Symposium*, Shelley's use of 'hermaphrodite' might be interpreted as calculated, in a Socratic sense, not only to provoke but to challenge ignorant prejudice. Shelley wrote in the preface to his earlier and highly controversial poem *Laon and Cythna* published in 1818, with its allusions to revolution and incest that he wished to:

> …startle the reader from the trance of everyday life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed therefore to the most universal of all feelings, and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention.'[178]

Calling a creature of purity and perfection 'hermaphrodite' forces people to consider the negative power of a name. The hermaphrodite in the *Witch of Atlas* might be said to

[174] Ibid., pp.140-141. Woodbridge refers to Hayles' PhD thesis, 'The Ambivalent Ideal: The Concept of Androgyny in English Renaissance Literature', (PhD thesis, University of Rochester, 1976).
[175] See Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, p.2.
[176] Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley*, p.213.
[177] Michael O'Neil, 'Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792-1822)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 05/08/2018.
[178] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Laon and Cyntha; or, The Revolution of the Golden City' (London, C. and J. Ollier, 1818), p. xxi; Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley*, p.213. It was retitled *The Revolt of Islam* a month later.

represent androgynous perfection under another name and might remind us of the famous line from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* that a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet.

One of Shelley's most beautiful yet implicit paeans to the androgynous state is to be found in *On Love*. Written in 1818, shortly after Shelley translated the *Symposium*, *On Love* echoes the sentiments expressed in Aristophanes' tale of the androgynes:

> We are born into the world and there is something within us which from the instant that we live and move thirsts after its likeness…the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating the deductions of our own, an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret, with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate to the vibrations of our own…[179]

Despite never admitting to reading the *Symposium*, Coleridge would describe something remarkably similar, suggesting if not first-hand knowledge, then at least a vicarious acquaintance with Aristophanes' tale:

> My nature requires another Nature for its support, a repose only in another from the necessary indigence of its Being - Intensely similar, yet not the same; or may I venture to say, the same indeed, but dissimilar, as the same breath sent with the same force, the same pauses, as with the same melody pre-imaged in the mind, into the Flute and the Clarion shall be the same soul diversely incarnate.[180]

Further support for Coleridge's familiarity with the *Symposium* might be found in J.H. Green's explanation of Coleridge's opinions on the story of creation in Genesis: 'in the formation of woman out of a rib of the man, it is intended to enforce a truth, similarly held by

[179]Shelley, 'On Love', in Timothy Webb (ed.) *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poems and Prose* (London and Vermont, Everyman, 1995), pp.105-106. Note the striking parallels between Shelley's description of love and Coleridge's below.
[180] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol. 1, 1679.

Plato, that male and female are the corresponding opposites of one and the same humanity.'[181] Coleridge did read the *Phaedo* and could well have been referring to Plato's theory of opposites generating out of some former and lesser substance.[182]

Hermaphroditism was the focus of increasing medical and scientific interest from the first half of the eighteenth century with some notable attempts to disabuse people of their suspicions and prejudices. Attempts were made to move the discussion from ontology to what was considered the more solid ground of epistemology.[183] Between 1729 and 1823 *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* published seven scientific papers on the duel-sexed condition. In 1741, the physician and antiquarian, James Parsons (1705-1770), a member of the Royal Society and of the Royal College of Physicians, published *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites* hoping to refute what he described as the preservation of fantastical notions and the production of socially-divisive pseudo-scientific works.[184] The *Tractatus de Hermaphroditis* may well have been one of those pseudo-scientific works.[185] In 1750, the Belgian surgeon, M. Vacherie, in his account of Michael-Anne Drouart, a Parisian hermaphrodite on show in Carnaby Street, London, admitted that the, 'taste of Mankind for the marvellous appears to have been more consulted than the truth.'[186] Both Arnaud and Vacherie warned against the dangers of supplying false facts within seemingly true accounts to people likely to misidentify the physically unusual as physically unnatural. Both accounts attest to the popular fascination with hermaphrodites at the time. But while Parsons was convinced that hermaphrodites did not exist and were

[181] J.H. Green, *Spiritual Philosophy: Founded on the teaching of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, by the late Joseph Henry Green, ed. by John Simon (London and Cambridge, MacMillan and Co., 1865), pp.240-241.
[182] *Phaedo* is a discussion about the soul.
[183] Richard Sha, *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750-1832* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p.128.
[184] See Giles Hudson, 'Parsons, James (1705-1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 25/07/2018. James Parsons, *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites* (London, 1741).
[185] *Tractatus de Hermaphroditis*, p.ii; Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, p.317.
[186] M. Vacherie, *The Account of the Famous Hermaphrodite, or, Parisian boy-girl, aged sixteen, named Michael-Anne* (London, 1750), p.14.

merely products of misidentification and imagination, Arnaud's own research made him more cautious in consigning the dual-sexed figure to the pages of fiction. 'By the term hermaphrodite,' Arnaud wrote, 'we understand him or her, in whom the parts, which form the essential difference between the two sexes, are found together, either perfectly or imperfectly. It is derived from the Greek, Ἑρμαφρόδιτος [Hermaphroditus], signifying to be made up, or consist of Mercury and Venus.' It is interesting to note Arnaud's use of the Roman names, Mercury and Venus, rather than the Greek, Hermes and Aphrodite, the roots of Hermaphroditus. But Arnaud was in little doubt as to the cultural origins of the term, writing that 'in Ovid we find the fabulous history which has given rise to that signification…'[187]

For Parsons, however, the main source of public misinformation over hermaphroditism and androgyny came not from ancient myth or salacious pseudo-scientific texts but from religious teaching and in particular from the Judaic Old Testament:

> We see how little it is to be wondered at, that the majority of the world should be thus riveted in their notions of Hermaphrodites, since it appears, that doctors of the Jewish, Pagan and Christian Churches have been promoters of them from time to time.[188]

It was the early Hebrews, Parsons argued, who first made Adam 'Androgynous', with a masculine front and a feminine behind. In a footnote Parsons also referred to the less common belief that Adam *and* Eve had both been 'Hermaphrodites'.[189] The conflation of androgyny with hermaphroditism is clear. Parsons also pointed to the varying laws of Rome, Egypt and the Jewish Talmud that classed hermaphroditism as effeminate and polluting.[190] Indeed, critics of Platonism and the Platonic tales of creation pointed to the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures upon the Attic philosopher, thereby not only highlighting the perverted

[187] George Arnaud, *A Dissertation on Hermaphrodites* (London, 1750), p.12.
[188] Parsons, *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry*, pp.xlix-l.
[189] Ibid., pp. xlix-l.
[190] Ibid., pp. xvii-xxvii.

stories of pagan myth-makers but the perversions of Judaism itself.[191] To support the Hebraic 'myth' as a Christian would be to believe that men and women were not made in God's androgynous image but were instead inferior and degenerate forms. As Parsons noted, early Divines in the time of Pope Innocent III were so far followers of the Rabbins:

> that they thought the sexes in Adam would never have been divided if he had not sinned; which was granting that Adam was created an Hermaphrodite, and that the two sexes were taken asunder afterwards. Others of these believed so firmly that Hermaphrodites existed, that they took pains to confute the above opinion, only fearing lest such should assume to themselves to have been the first human creatures made, from the words above mentioned, 'God created Man Male and Female, etc.' and consequently the most worthy.[192]

For Parsons, the Protestant world-view could not allow androgyny and hermaphroditism to exist. Yet, if these religious descriptions were the products of myth, there were some who believed that the many ancient descriptions of androgyneity pointed to a fundamental truth.

Conclusion

As a radical symbol of psycho-sexual equality, the concept of the unsexed mind was influenced and supported by a critical reanalysis of the *Symposium*, Plato's controversial dialogue on love and friendship. While earlier English translations of Plato's dialogue on love attracted radical interest, it was a return to the original Greek texts that helped to support and inspire radical social and scientific theories of psycho-sexual indeterminacy. The fears and prejudices associated with sexual inversion and social subversion, compounded by a general nation-wide ignorance of the Greek philosophers and historians, led to this gender-neutral concept of psycho-sexual equality becoming inextricably linked with the Ovidian hermaphrodite and with illicit and unnatural acts. The risks to financial and social status

[191] See Inspector, 'Sabellian, or Unitarian Controversy', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (July 1816), pp.720-721.
[192] Parsons, *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry*, pp.xlix-l.

through associating publicly with such ideas resulted in the largely implicit promotion of this egalitarian concept. The heterodox reworking of Platonic Uranianism, as demonstrated in Shelley's most explicit illustration, is critical to our understanding of radical sexual politics during the Romantic era. Shelley's translation allows us to better appreciate and discern the implicit links between the ideas raised in it and those developed within the broader heterodox radical community, as will be explored in the following chapters.

In this chapter we explored the origins of the concept of androgyny and the reception of Platonism in England. In the following chapter, I wish to examine the role of German influence upon the revivifying of Platonism in certain quarters in England and ask whether the implicitness of the promotion of the concept and its conflation with the physical and lascivious hermaphrodite may have arisen in part from a suspicion of foreign ideas as subversive and injurious to social order. Chapter two examines the attraction of new German methods of analysis and criticism that not only provided heterodox radicals with a renewed appreciation of the Socratic Method but a revivified understanding of Plato's theories of personal development.

Chapter Two

The Attractions of German Interdisciplinary Learning and a Resurgent Platonism

England's status as an island nation has often marked it out, both in its own eyes and in those of others, as insular and different from the rest of Continental Europe. The insularity of England in the nineteenth century is seen by Gertrude Himmelfarb as 'a standing challenge.' Despite the temptation to 'bring England into Europe', the foreign ideas discerned in figures such as Coleridge, Carlyle and George Eliot were 'so completely assimilated that the very word "influence" seems inappropriate.' Indeed, for Himmelfarb a 'common market' of foreign ideas had only a 'peripheral effect on England'.[1] But is this a fair assessment or is it illustrative of a tendency in comparative histories to gloss over cultural complexities and in doing so to gloss over important if marginalised channels of influence?

No one would deny that peoples born in the same country do not share a common history, similar values, traditions, literature, music and so forth, nor that at times of conflict those shared experiences should unite those people in a sense of national solidarity. And yet, what Himmelfarb's description demonstrates is how, when countries and nations become the subjects of comparative histories with the intention of discerning 'influence', cultural homogeneity is all but assumed. When we break a country down into its constituent parts, however – its regions, boroughs, classes and religious sects – the ability to detect a 'common' or homogenous culture and in turn a common or homogenous 'influence' becomes all but impossible.[2] We might even argue that it becomes 'inappropriate'.

This chapter explores the significance of German influence upon heterodox radicals in England, challenging those who suggest that German influence had all but disappeared by the

[1] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Marriage and Morals among the Victorians* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p.xi
[2] For regional differences, see Katherine Navikas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire 1798-1815* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009).

turn of the nineteenth century. I do not wish to contest the overall argument that German influence in England witnessed a notable decline from the turn of the nineteenth century, I do wish, however, to suggest that that decline was not total or across the board. While important scholarship by Monica Class, Vigus and Rosemary Ashton illustrate the continued importance of German influence upon exceptional individuals, such as Coleridge, there has been little close study of the influence of German thought upon the broader communities in which these individuals moved. This chapter contends that the continued and growing interest expressed by figures such as Coleridge for German ideas and practices did not emerge or develop in isolation but was encouraged and supported by a broader community of intellectual and ideological sympathisers. Again, scholarly focus upon a declining literary influence has obscured the extent to which German theological, philosophical and scientific influence persisted within this radical community. Instead of focusing solely on individuals this chapter will follow the advice of Ledger-Lomas and examine the channels of communication along which advances in German philosophical, scientific, theological and pedagogical learning penetrated and influenced heterodox radical thought, providing it with new and enticing evidence in support of the unsexed mind. This chapter is not concerned with charting the transmission of a specific idea but with exploring the ways in which advances in, and attitudes towards, learning and methods of practice helped to influence the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals in England. It is when we examine the influence of German learning in England that we begin to note the subtle differences between a more egalitarian Platonised interpretation of androgyny promoted by heterodox radicals and a more patriarchal Judeo-Christian interpretation endorsed by evangelicals and increasingly by society at large.

German Philosophy and the Revival of Platonism

The German revival of Platonism began in all seriousness in the mid-eighteenth century. The classicists J.A. Ernesti and David Ruhnken helped to revive classical philology from the 1750s by insisting that Greek sources be read in the original.[3] In stark contrast to England, a steady flow of German translations of Plato's works appeared from the 1760s and continued well into the first quarter of the nineteenth century. That the English were aware of this revival is evident in the records of annual publications and reviews of literary fairs published in more liberal and radical journals such as the *Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* which illustrated the prodigious nature of German Platonic scholarship during this period.[4] It was the German historian Johann Jakob Brucker (1696-1770) who provided the first genuinely historical account of the Platonic school in *Historia Critica Philosophiae* published between 1742 and 1744. Brucker rejected the traditional syncretistic approach employed by Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Proclus. Instead of relying upon Latin commentaries to elucidate Plato's thoughts, Brucker returned to the dialogues themselves, stripping Platonism of what he termed its 'Neoplatonic' accretions. Behind the obscure, esoteric spiritualism expounded by early Christians and by Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Proclus and later Ficino, there emerged a more pragmatic and exoteric Platonism.[5] In 1791, the Unitarian minister William Enfield (1741-1797) translated Brucker's account of the Platonic school into English, publishing a two-volume abridgement of the original five-volume work.[6] The German-produced Bipont edition of Plato's Dialogues was yet another important and at the time, unique contribution to Plato scholarship. Published between 1781 and 1787, Stefanus'

[3] See Frederick C. Beiser, *Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press, 2006), p.68.
[4] See a 'Retrospect' of German literature in the *Monthly Magazine*, January and July 1801; January 1802; January 1805 and January 1812.
[5] See Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, pp.101-102.
[6] Johann Jakob Brucker, *The History of Philosophy from the Earliest Times to the beginning of the Present Century*, trans. by William Enfield (London, J. Johnson, 1791); R.K. Webb, 'Enfield, William (1741-1797)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 07/08/2018.

Greek and Ficino's Latin texts were accompanied by an abstract of the dialogues by the German philosopher and historian Dietrich Tiedemann (1748-1803). Though a little too discursive for some critics, 'deviating into mystical disquisitions',[7] Tiedemann's notes provided an important guide and commentary. As Coleridge advised those embarking on theological study, once they had studied Plato's dialogues, using the 'Bipont Edition with Tiedemann's Prolegomenon & the Dialogues' and studying these in conjunction with 'the sacred Text and its ablest English and German Commentators', then only should the student progress to 'the Fathers, and the original documents of Ecclesiastical history'.[8] Crucially, for those who could read the ancient languages, the Bipont edition allowed for close comparison between the Greek dialogues and their Latin, Neoplatonic and Christian translations. In 1827, the English bibliographer William Lowndes (c.1793-1843) noted how amongst Germans, 'Plato has uniformly been the favourite of the ablest philosophers, and whether the mystic Reuchlin, or Leibnitz, or Kant, brought their own theories to light, they all equally acknowledged Plato to be the great object of their admiration among ancient writers'.[9] It was the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) however, who, despite his many criticisms of the ancient philosopher, was pivotal in reigniting interest in Platonism in Germany. Highly critical of the contemporary revival of 'Platonic philosophizing' in Germany in the 1790s amongst scholars such as Johann Georg Schlosser and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Kant helped to encourage a broader reassessment of classical documents and philosophy and in particular that of Plato in a way that contemporary German philosophers, such as Jacobi, had failed to do.[10] Kant's Critical Philosophy or 'Philosophism'[11] as it was labelled by its detractors, encouraged the development of new methods of interdisciplinary critical analysis.

[7] William Lowndes, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Plato* (London, J.M'Creery, 1827), pp.32-33.
[8] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol. 3, 3934.
[9] Lowndes, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Plato*, pp.32-33.
[10] See Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.54.

A beneficiary of this revival of Platonism and one of the key exponents of German thought in England during the Romantic era was the Unitarian diarist and journalist Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867). As the son of non-conformists, Robinson was prevented from attending either Oxford or Cambridge. But with a growing dissatisfaction with orthodox Dissent as well, and the inheritance of one hundred pounds a year from an uncle in 1798, Robinson decided to travel to Germany. Having travelled through various states, Robinson settled in the city of Jena and between 1802 and 1805 studied at the university, the centre of German idealism and early Romanticism, where he concentrated on philosophy and in particular a course on aesthetics given by the Romantic philosopher F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1845).[12] Robinson arrived at Jena at a time when, according to Beiser, Plato's influence upon Schelling was at its most apparent.[13] Though critical of Schelling's 'profound abstraction and enthusiastic mystification', in a letter to his uncle, Thomas Robinson, in 1802, Robinson explained that Schelling's class on aesthetics chartered the 'development of Platonic ideas and explanation of the philosophy veiled in the Greek mythology'.[14] While at Jena, Robinson also was introduced to the work of the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and to his *Wissenschaftslihre* (epistemology or theory of science) which was, according to Robinson, 'in its elements the philosophy of Plato, Spinoza and Berkeley'.[15] Through his friendship with the writer Christian Brentano (1784-1851) and most probably as a student at Jena, Robinson also met and conversed with the Romantic philosopher, Friedrich Schlegel

[11] 'Preface', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (September 1799), p.vii. Philosophism or 'the love of sophism, the love of falsehood,' was distinguished from philosophy which denoted love of truth. 'Book Review', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (December 1799), p.560.
[12] Vincent Newey, 'Robinson, Henry Crabb (1775-1867)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 12/08/2018. Also at Jena were the Austrian philosopher, Leonhard Reinhold – a popularizer of Kant - Johann Gottlieb Fichte and G.W.F. Hegel – important figures in German Idealism - and Friedrich von Schlegel.
[13] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.71.
[14] Henry Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. 1, edited by Thomas Sadler (London, MacMillan & Co., 1869), p.128.
[15] Ibid., p.88.

(1772-1829). Indeed, Robinson wrote of being 'on terms of intimacy' with Schlegel.[16] How much of Schlegel's ideas Robinson was familiar with is hard to say but according to Beiser the influence of Plato upon Schlegel was at its 'most visible and pervasive'.[17] Of all the early German Romantics, it was Schlegel who was most attracted to the concept of androgyny. Robinson was familiar enough with Schlegel to know that the philosopher had plans [never executed] 'to translate Plato, on purpose to shew precisely how much of his transcendental philosophy was known by him'.[18] With Robinson mixing in the same circles in England as Coleridge and Shelley, it is interesting to note in letters addressed to the London bookseller Thomas Hookam in 1812 and 1813, Shelley's interest in Kant and to discover that at the same time Shelley translated the *Symposium* and wrote *Discourse on the Art and Manners of the Greeks* in 1818, he was reading an English translation of *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1815) written by the poet, translator and critic, August Schlegel (1767-1845),[19] who, as Hugh Roberts notes, was greatly influenced by the philosophy of his brother, Friedrich Schlegel.[20] We do not know whether Shelley had any direct knowledge of Friedrich Schlegel's work, but as Brown observes, he may well have read a review of Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*, published in 1818 by William Blackwood, because it happened to be printed alongside a highly scathing review of Shelley's poem *The Revolt of Islam*.[21] Friedrich Schlegel's *Lectures* dealt comprehensively with Greek philosophy and in particular Platonism and its development and transmission. It is not the place here to consider Schlegel's influences, but Beiser refers to his close reading of Plato in Greek.[22] Schlegel highlighted also the marked discrepancy in the status of women

[16] Ibid., p.86.
[17] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.68.
[18] Henry Crabb Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant, from an Under-Graduate in the University of Jena,No.I' *Monthly Register and Encyclopedian Magazine* (August 1802), p.415.
[19] Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley*, pp.9, 19
[20] Hugh Roberts, *Shelley and the Chaos of History: A New Politics of Poetry* (Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p.90.
[21] Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley*, pp.10-11.
[22] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.68.

in the different parts of ancient Greece, pointing to their relative freedom and equality in earlier periods and noting the cultural construction of Uranianism.[23] The similarities between the opinions of Schlegel and those expressed by Shelley in his *Discourse* are at times quite striking.[24] It is interesting to observe also, that of Plato's dialogues, it was the *Symposium* which most captured the imaginations of both men. Just like Shelley and other heterodox radicals, Schlegel was attracted to the idea of androgyny, believing the 'true person' to be, 'he who has come to the middle point of humanity'.[25]

It was in 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant', published in 1802 by the *Monthly Register,* that Robinson observed, if 'some contend that the moderns see over the illustrious Greek, others contend that the German philosophy is but a restoration of Platonism.'[26] For Robinson, this restoration was begun in all seriousness by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Although not the only philosophy taught at Jena, it was, according to Robinson, Kant's Critical Philosophy, expounded in his *Critique*, that was 'the centre round which everything turns: former writers and former systems are considered only in their more or less relation to the new school. It is not pretended', he continued, 'that the elements of the German philosophy are new, and it is the business of the learned to shew the analogies'.[27] And one such analogy was Platonism. Robinson recollected how many years before 'a few words dropped from an avowed Platonist' had seemed a riddle until they were made 'intelligible' through Kant. [28] Critical to the resurgent interest in Platonism was Kant's critique of Plato's theory of ideas in which ideas represented a separate and truly real world of which the forms

[23] Friedrich Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern* (Edinburgh and London, William Blackwood and Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1818), pp.55-57.
[24] *Plato's Banquet Translated from the Greek, A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks*.
[25] See Beiser, *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, p.132.
[26] Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant, No.I', p.415.
[27] Ibid., p.415.
[28] Ibid., p.415.

of the empirical world were poor imitations.[29] 'Kant and Plato', Robinson remarked, 'open to us the same World of Ideas….' [30] 'However opposed these schools are', Robinson observed, 'they are united in the one great point, the admission of such a world'. For Robinson, the only notable difference between the two philosophers was in the relation of the powers of knowledge to this world of ideas. Like Plato, Kant dwelt on the attainment of knowledge and the distinction between Understanding and Reason. Where 'Understanding' was analytical and a product of the phenomenal (sensible) world; 'Reason' was synthetic and represented intuitive insight into the noumenal (intellectual) world.[31] Unlike Plato, however, Kant did not believe that the human mind was capable of direct knowledge of the noumenal world, nor that ideas were constitutive and thus capable of organising existence. Kant was critical of the ancient philosopher's venturing out 'on the wings of the ideas, in the empty space of the pure understanding', a practice that, meeting with no 'resistance' had nothing concrete upon which to mount a stand.[32] For Kant, ideas were regulative and thus derived from human interest in the possibility of their perfection. Yet, contrary to those who believe Kant to have rejected the Platonic system of ideas and thus the supposedly irrational powers of intuition, Beiser argues that the German philosopher was clear that there was 'an *a priori* structure to reason, and that the decisions of the will have value only insofar as they conform to this structure'.[33] In his letters to the *Monthly Register*, Robinson explained that although Kant's *Critique* was a refutation of the theory of innate ideas, there was something of the 'a priori' in Kant's ideas because it was impossible to reason about experience without it.[34] Unlike the associationist and materialist philosophies of Locke, Hume and Hartley, which in essence described ideas

[29] Simon Blackburn (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.183-184.
[30] Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant, No. I', p.415.
[31] See Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, pp.41-42.
[32] Immanuel Kant, *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 1929), p.47.
[33] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.65.
[34] See Henry Crabb Robinson, 'Letter on the Philosophy of Kant, By an Under-Graduate at the University of Jena, No. III', *Monthly Register and Encyclopedian Magazine* (April 1803), pp.485-488.

as the products of sense impressions only, and thus the products of custom and tradition, as Robinson explained, the new German philosophy described 'the mind of man as essentially active, not the mere recipient of impressions. The basis of truth must be sought in the essential laws of mind; whence arise the conceptions *a priori*, not in physics, but in metaphysics'.[35] As Beiser argues, 'when reason reflects upon itself to know the laws of its own activity, it discovers these laws through the act of recreating them. These laws are not created *ex nihilo*, of course, but they do have to be *reproduced* by the finite mind if it is to know them'.[36] For Robinson, Kant's philosophy began with 'setting up as the basis of all science… "pure conceptions of the understanding", or NOTIONS (in general). They arise independently of all experience, though they find objects in experience, and so acquire *reality*'.[37] As Coleridge explained, 'by knowledge of a priori, we do not mean, that can know any thing [sic] previously to experience, which would be a contradiction in terms; but that having once known it by occasion of experience…we then know that it must have pre-existed, or the experience itself would have been impossible'.[38] In other words, although an *a priori* concept might not be 'derived' from experience, its existence may still be presupposed in any mode of human thought, for example in the concept or idea of Being.[39] A link was created between the spiritual and the material or between metaphysics and empirical physics and thus a means of at least intuiting the origins of things – of time and of nature - beyond sensory data. The spiritual or metaphysical world was not some other-worldly and hence unknowable realm but something that might be harnessed alongside knowledge of the temporal and material realm. It is possible to see this appeal to the noumenal world in

[35] Henry Crabb Robinson, 'Letter from an Under-Graduate, at the University of Jena, on the Philosophy of Kant, No.II', *Monthly Register and Encyclopedian Magazine* (November 1802), p.12.
[36] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.65.
[37] Robinson, 'Letter from an Under-Graduate, No. II', p.9.
[38] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, ed. by George Sampson (Cambridge, The University Press, 1920), p.177.
[39] See Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*.

Godwin's *Political Justice*, with its account of moral truth and the apparent influence of Platonism.[40]

Yet, as Beiser points out, far from being passive as Kant accused Plato's Ideas of being, Plato, like Kant, stressed the 'importance of the activity of mind in appropriating truth'.[41] It was this active appropriation of truth, both metaphysically and physically, that heterodox radicals would glean from a revivified Platonism.[42] It was this reengagement with Plato's understanding of ideas that helped, arguably, to mediate between the intellectual and academic worlds of theology and science, between what Beiser describes as the *suprarationalism* of the mystical Protestant tradition - in which reason had no insight into the realm of universals, and eternal laws did not exist because the divine will had the power to change such things[43] - and the material empiricism of the Enlightenment, in which all ideas were 'derived from sensation or experience' only.[44] In both the Protestant tradition and Baconian empiricism, man's knowledge was restricted to the realms of time and space and therefore strictly mechanical. We might see in this the interpretations of androgyny adopted by political theorists such as Locke and evangelicals such as More in which the patriarchal definition of the marriage of sexual and unequal opposites was based either on the unchanging laws of nature or upon the undeviating authority of God. After the horrors of revolution, heterodox radicals such as Coleridge grew ever more concerned that reasoning based on sensory experience alone could only result in the nihilism of scepticism and the rejection of rational belief. Although religious belief and experience varied significantly within this network of heterodox radicals, all could be said to have searched for that intermediary between two types of reason, intuitive and empirical. Although by no means a

[40] See Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), pp.xvi-xvii.
[41] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.65.
[42] See Vigus' analysis of Coleridge's criticism of Kant's theory that ideas are regulative rather than constitutive, in *Platonic Coleridge*, p.47.
[43] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, p.63.
[44] Robinson, 'Letter from an Under-Graduate, No. II', p.7.

Platonist, what Kant arguably reawakened in the minds of heterodox radicals through his critique of Plato's 'Ideas' was a sense of hope garnered through the theory of *a priori* reasoning.

In his *Critique*, Kant outlined Plato's theory of ideas as issuing 'from highest reason, and from that source have come to be shared in by human reason, which, however, is now no longer in its original state, but is constrained laboriously to recall, by a process of reminiscence (which is named philosophy), the old ideas, now very much obscured'. Arguing, as was so often the case, that those who came after might understand the original author 'better than he understood himself', Kant wrote that Plato 'knew that our reason naturally exerts itself to modes of knowledge which so far transcend the bounds of experience that no given empirical object can ever coincide with them, but which must none the less be recognised as having their own reality, and which are by no means mere fictions of the brain'. Although he could not agree with Plato's mystical hypostatising of ideas, for Kant, 'Plato found the chief instances of his ideas in the field of the practical, that is, in what rests upon freedom, which in its turn rests upon modes of knowledge that are peculiar products of reason'.[45] It was this notion of freedom as a pure and necessary idea that Kant would return to again in his controversial *Conflict of the Faculties*, discussed below. Developing this theory of pure ideas, Kant distinguished between what he considered to be original causal, 'fundamental' and 'necessary' ideas, such as freedom, and what he described as 'crude conceptions', based purely on arbitrary experience, abstracted 'from the actually existing hindrances', which although rising out of human nature, neglected pure ideas on account of the 'vulgar appeal to so-called adverse experience', which itself might never have emerged had people established laws in accordance with the Platonic theory of pure ideas such as freedom by which the '*freedom of each is made to be consistent with that of all others*'. Kant

[45] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp.310-311.

argued that remedies to social disorder were to be found in these pure ideas and that although perfection 'may never…come into being', society and its institutions might aspire to perfection through appreciation of the importance of Platonic 'Ideas' as necessary 'archetypes of the things themselves'.[46]

Crucial for notions of freedom, it was not only in the practical 'moral sphere' but in nature itself that, for Kant, Plato was able to discern 'clear proofs of an origin of ideas':

> A plant, an animal, the orderly arrangement of the cosmos – presumably therefore the entire natural world – clearly show that they are possible only according to ideas, and that though no single creature in the conditions of its individual existence coincides with the idea of what is most perfect in its kind – just as little as does any human being with the idea of humanity, which he yet carries in his soul as the archetype of his actions – these ideas are none the less completely determined in the Supreme Understanding, each as an individual and each as unchangeable, and are the original causes of things.[47]

The idea of freedom as a constitutional part of human nature was tied up in the originating cause. Although Kant would never have described himself as a Platonist, his description of Plato's 'proofs of an origin from ideas' could be said to help reveal the utility of Platonism, which in turn might offer insights to theories of evolution or at least offer objections to theories of simple emanation. Kant's description of Plato's 'origin of ideas', might at first sight be said to posit a divine or emanatory view of nature but there is in the idea of a Supreme Understanding, the notion of the original androgynous archetype (the most perfect of its kind) and through this the germ of progressive development. I have no evidence that Darwin read Kant's *Critique* – although he may have known of the philosopher through the English physician, Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808), a fellow 'Lunatic' – but it might be

[46] Ibid., p.312.
[47] Ibid., p.313.

possible to see Kant's analysis feeding into emerging theories and discoveries of human and animal development.

But if Kant helped to reveal the utility of Plato's world of ideas, it was Brucker who helped to reveal the utility of the Socratic Method. For Brucker, the Socratic Method formed:

> the wise and generous design, of instituting a new and more useful method of instruction. He justly conceived the true end of philosophy to be, not to make an ostentatious display of superior learning and ability in subtle disputations or ingenious conjectures, but to free mankind from the dominion of pernicious prejudices; to correct their vices; to inspire them with the love of virtue, and thus conduct the character of a moral philosopher...Whatever is above, doth not concern us. He estimated the value of knowledge by its utility, and recommended the study of geometry, astronomy and other sciences, only so far as they admit of a practical application to the purposes of human life.[48]

The Socratic Method was, Coleridge asserted, 'inductive throughout, [arguing] on all subjects not only from but in and by, inductions of facts!'[49] It might be argued that it was this critical and inquisitorial Socratic system that was apparent in the German system of higher education.

Kantian Influence in England

Although providing one of the most explicit and candid descriptions of the philosophy and its reception in the early nineteenth century, Robinson was by no means the first to introduce Kant's Critical Theory to the English public. Prior to Robinson's brief synopses, knowledge of Kant and his theory of ideas came through other sources. Despite having to wait until the end of the nineteenth century to read all of Kant's three *Critiques* in English, as Class points out, expositions of his works were 'readily available in English for non-German speakers like

[48] See Brucker, *History of Philosophy*, pp.158-160.
[49] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Essay VII', *The Friend: A Series of Essays*, p.193.

Coleridge before 1798'.[50] As René Wellek, Vigus and more recently Class highlight, German influence was not only imbibed initially through Germanophiles such as Robinson and Coleridge but had already started to emerge before these.[51] According to Vigus, 'considerable interest' in Kant amongst radicals in England during the 1790s and especially between 1795 and 1798,[52] was fuelled by the efforts of the Irish physician, J.A. O'Keeffe, Beddoes and Friedrich August Nitsch. Although Beddoes would have a notable influence upon Coleridge's budding interest in German thought and of Kant, of these three, Nitsch was, according to Class, the most important and is the most neglected early promoter of Kantian ideas in England by British historians of the period.[53] A former student of Kant, Nitsch founded the radical Kantian Society in London, giving lectures on the German philosopher in 1794, 1795 and 1796. Among those attending Nitsch's lecture on 23rd March 1795 was Godwin, and at a time when he is known to have made significant revisions to the second edition of *Political Justice*.[54] This would appear to tally with Robinson's belief that despite the differences between the two thinkers, Godwin's most famous political treatise had 'very much of the exalted morality of the German school.[55] In 1796 Nitsch published *A General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles concerning Man, the World, the Deity, submitted to the Consideration of the Learned*. According to Wellek, Nitsch's work was the first independent English publication on Kant.[56] And according to Class, this introduction to Kant was advertised and reviewed favourably by the liberal press. Enfield recommended it in the *Monthly Review* and Beddoes reviewed it in the *Monthly Magazine* and also called for the

[50] Monica Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796-1817: Coleridge's Responses to German Philosophy* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), pp.1-2.
[51] See René Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England, 1793-1838* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1931); Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*; Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas.*
[52] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.36.
[53] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.74.
[54] Ibid., pp.44-45.
[55] Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant, No. I', p.413.
[56] Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England*, p.7.

translation of Kant's works in full.[57] Indeed, Beddoes is a particularly good example of how information and knowledge was passed throughout this heterodox radical network. Although a student initially at Oxford, his growing interest in chemistry inspired during his medical studentship at Edinburgh in the 1780s and his interest in matters of social reform would put him in touch with radicals such as Watt and through him members of the Lunar Society such as Darwin and Edgeworth, whose daughter, the novelist and educationist, Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849), Beddoes would later marry. It was while living in Bristol in the 1790s that Beddoes would also come into contact with Coleridge.[58] The links between heterodox radicals and the dissemination of German critical philosophy and a renewed awareness of Platonism were complex but tightknit. Many of those inspired by Nitsch's work and by his lectures were from this network of heterodox radicals.

Nitsch believed that the new German philosophy had something to offer English radicals that the material philosophy of Associationism, advanced by Locke and Hartley, did not; that something was free will and the belief in the perfectibility of the human mind.[59] The idea of free will was present in the German concept of *Bildung* as self-realisation. It posited the freedom of the rational mind over that of the material body[60] - something present in Plato's theory of ideas - and as such was critical in the debate that emerged over the supposed links between sexual function and intellectual difference.

This growing interest in German Critical Philosophy did not go unnoticed by the more conservative elements of society. Concerned increasingly with the egalitarian and seemingly anarchical ideas propagated by Kantians, the Episcopalian Bishop of Edinburgh, James Walker, argued that Kantians 'teach…that there is no other law than the sense of duty which

[57] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.2.
[58] Michael Neve, 'Beddoes, Thomas (1760-1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 13/08/2018.
[59] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, pp.38,194.
[60] Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, p.147.

exists in the mind of every individual, that each man stands single in the universe, and must act from his particular sense of duty.' He continued, warning that disciples of Kant, 'were warmly attached to the doctrine of unlimited improvement and perfection of human nature their labours abundantly pave the way for the sublimest [sic] flights of the *newly deified intellect of man*.'[61] It was Kant's desire and the desire of those who followed him, to enter into the origins and processes of every realm of learning and thought and to judge these alike and without apparent due reverence, that caused such consternation in England, leading many to view German 'philosophism' and the secret mysticism of Platonism as synonymous. Class is right to insist, therefore, that while the 'notional content' of Kant's work might be deemed 'purely philosophical' its reputation was 'profoundly political.'[62]

That few beyond heterodox radicals in England read Kant and even fewer understood him can, in part, be attributed to the negative reviews supplied by Walker and the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. Kantianism was not only a badge of immorality but a 'badge of intellectual exclusivity'.[63] Kantianism was soon associated with stories of the 'illuminati' and of secret societies and esoteric codes. As Elinor Shaffer explains, German criticism was technical and esoteric and rendered all the more obscure by the style in which it often was written.[64] Despite being criticised in the English press for its lack of rigour and evidence, Abbé Barruel's conspiracy theory, published in 1797, warned of clandestine meetings between German intelligentsia and Jacobins. More rigorous expositions of this band of 'illuminati' were subsequently spread by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*.[65] As Walker asserted in 1800:

> What I have found often remarked among the Kantists in Germany, I have not unfrequently [sic] observed among the partisans of German literature whatever

[61] James Walker, 'The Literati and Literature of Germany, Letter II', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (August 1800), p.570.
[62] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.122.
[63] Ibid., p.131.
[64] E.S. Shaffer, *'Kubla Khan' and the Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.25.
[65] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.192.

> Frenchmen or Englishmen…The philosophy of Kant is the most valuable production of human beings – why? Because his partisans *assert* it; because, they who are not in the secret, cannot *comprehend* it.[66]

Writing in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1804 on the state of philosophy in Germany, M.G. Schweighauser implied that amongst the journal's educated and liberal-minded readers, Kant's works were so well known as to 'render a detailed review of them unnecessary.'[67] The new philosophy appealed to a highly educated, yet increasingly diminishing, minority.

Print Media and the Decline of German Influence

Emerging in the late 1780s, the flowering of interest in German works and ideas in England was in rapid decline by the late 1790s, just as Platonism in Germany was reaching its zenith. From the late 1790s increasingly, printers, book sellers, translators, and editors were accused of flooding the market with cheap German romances and popular melodrama, endorsing second rate works, such as those by the German dramatist, August von Kotzebue. In addition to their nauseating sentimentality, such works were accused of promoting Jacobinism and 'extreme liberalism'.[68] Cheap German dramas and novels, it would seem, gave grist to conservative prejudice and provided opponents of free will and equality with the opportunity of tarring all German thought with the same negative brush.

Initially sympathetic to German culture, the *Monthly Register*, which had specialised in continental works and to which Robinson had contributed his essays on Kant, soon folded under the pressure of conservative attack. Opened in 1801, the *Monthly Register* closed in 1803. The *German Museum or Monthly Repository of the Literature of Germany*, as its title suggests, was established purely to promote German works. It survived for one year before

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[66] 'To the Editor', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (December 1800), p. 508;
[67] M.G. Schweighauser, 'On the Present State of Philosophy in Germany', *Monthly Magazine* (October 1804), p.204.
[68] Bayard Quincy Morgan and A.R. Hohlfeld (eds.), *German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860* (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press , 1949), p.44.

folding in 1801, again in large part owing to the accusations levelled at it by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. The failure of these, and in particular the *German Museum*, is often cited as proof of growing distaste in England for all things German from the turn of the nineteenth century. While it would be wrong to deny a downward trend or to discount the negative influence of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, it can be argued that the limited editorial scope of the *German Museum* simply failed to attract the loyal readership necessary to survive in what was an extremely competitive and risky market, where journals appeared and disappeared with astonishing speed. In its third and final volume, the editor of the *German Museum*, James Beresford, acknowledged the challenge posed by counter-revolutionaries but admitted at the same time that 'a small, though respectable and chosen, host of friends' was not enough to maintain the struggle for survival.[69] One of the most enthusiastic promoters of German works was Joseph Johnson's *Analytical Review*. Johnson not only collaborated with a publishing house in Hamburg but published reviews and notices of numerous German works in his radical journal. One such work was Wollstonecraft's translation of C.G. Salzmann's *Elements of Morality for the use of Children*, published by Johnson in 1790. According to Class, not only as editor of the *Analytical Review* but as a publisher and bookseller, Johnson pioneered the transmission of critical German philosophy in England by publishing Beddoes' *Observations on the Nature of Demonstrative Evidence* (1793) in which Kant's epistemology was discussed, and by commissioning an English translation of J.S. Beck's popularisation of critical philosophy in 1797.[70] Yet, the onslaughts of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which had been established in 1798 to root out Jacobinism, led to the suspension of the journal that very year, prior to Johnson's imprisonment for six months for sedition in early 1799.

[69] Ibid., pp.47-48.
[70] See Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*. p.114; Trevor H. Levere, 'Coleridge and the Sciences', in Cunningham and Jardine (eds.), *Romanticism and the Sciences* (Cambridge, Cambridge University, 2009), p.297.

According to Ashton, journals such as the *Monthly Review* and the *Monthly Magazine*, once keen advocates of German works, had by 1800, 'almost stopped discussing…' them.[71] From 1797 there was, in Ashton's words, an 'undiscriminating and wholesale change of attitude in the press to German works'.[72] This was further aided by the introduction of the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in 1798. Regarding critiques of German drama by hitherto liberal-minded journals Ashton writes that 'a glance at the subject-matter of…the *Monthly Review* and the *Monthly Magazine* from 1790 to 1800 shows how complete the reversal was.'[73] Certainly, critiques of German drama from 1800 onwards are noticeably more negative and even at times vicious. While we cannot dismiss evidence of decline, we must be wary, however, of equating 'almost' with 'all' and of interpreting a reversal of interest in drama as evidence of a reversal of interest in all genres and subjects. As the article by Schweighauser above would appear to demonstrate, German literature in its broadest sense was not entirely forsaken. Very much as Ledger-Lomas implies, we need to pay more attention not only to the type of German literature being reviewed, but also the political and religious leanings of the journals and people promoting them.

Counter-revolutionaries, however, were not the only critics. Criticism came from those supposedly sympathetic to German ideas. Remarking on how unsurprising it was that Kant's first criticism should remain untranslated in England, Robinson bemoaned how every day English readers were 'furnished with the very refuse of German literature, the works which the Germans themselves scorn…'[74] But as Robinson's article implied, the flooding of the English market with German 'refuse' might have been viewed by suspicious Germanophiles as a cynical ploy on behalf of the authorities to obscure or bury the radical implications of Kant's philosophy for social and political reform. An anonymous review of Kotzebue's plays

[71] Ashton, *German Idea*, p.30.
[72] Ibid., p.32.
[73] Ibid., p.30.
[74] Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant, No.I', p.415.

published in the *Monthly Register* in 1802, the same year as Robinson's 'Letters', would appear to support this suspicion. Kotzebue's plays were described by the reviewer as 'not German literature; though popular German works, they are not considered as classical here…It is really distressing to those who, like me, look on the German literature and philosophy as the spring whence we must take new draughts of science and taste, to behold that, in being imported, they are polluted by coming through impure channels.'[75] While writing positively on the German contribution to theology, jurisprudence, politics, philosophy, history and science, a retrospective of German literature in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1801 had this to say on the issue of novels and romances: 'Under this head we counted no less than 262 titles: of these a very great majority is no doubt destined to supply the cheesemonger and grocer; here and there, however, a few illustrious names appear, which deserve to be ushered into public in better company.'[76] A closer inspection of the *Monthly Review* reveals that editorial contempt focused for the most part upon popular German drama and in particular that by Kotzebue. What these journals demonstrate amply is that German works were not simply dismissed out of hand. The failures of certain magazines are of less significance to our study, therefore, than the reasons for the survival of others.

Commenting on the *Monthly Magazine*, Vigus points out that while it 'remained both unwaveringly radical and successful…[it]…increasingly concentrated on politics to the exclusion of literature.'[77] While Vigus highlights the continuing radicalism of the magazine he perhaps overlooks the significance of the final part of his statement. Although the titles of many journals included the word 'literature', it would appear that, certainly with the more radical publications, 'literature' was more of an afterthought. Closer inspection of the *Monthly Magazine,* edited by John Aikin between 1796 and 1806, suggests that the 'reversal'

[75] 'German Literature', *Monthly Register* (August 1802), pp.397-398.
[76] 'Half Yearly Retrospect of German Literature', *Monthly Magazine* (July 1801), p.643.
[77] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge,* p.38.

of interest in German culture was decidedly patchy and by no means universal. Disparaging remarks can be found in the journal, for example the concluding remarks in a half-yearly retrospect of German Literature in 1801: 'Novels, Poems, Plays, and Periodical Trash, without end, press upon us for notice – it must be left to the weeders.'[78] As the above comments by Robinson and the anonymous author would suggest, criticism appears to have been aimed at the outpouring of novels and plays and not with the outpouring of philosophical, theological, scientific and political works. The review of the materials considered is not entirely uncritical but, on the whole, the piece by no means denotes a wholesale dismissal of German intellectual endeavour. Simple omission would have been more effective. It was, as the journal suggested, for the 'weeders' to make up their own minds.[79]

Such evidence would suggest that the reasons behind the reduction in reviews of German literature were more complex than is often portrayed. More research is needed but it would appear that it was conservative journals that were more inclined to toe the *Anti-Jacobin* line, with liberal and radical journals presenting a far more equivocal attitude towards German works and ideas. While the *Monthly Review* would indeed appear to have been affected in some respects by *Anti-Jacobin* attacks, the *Monthly Magazine*, as Vigus points out, continued largely unaffected beyond 1797,[80] publishing generally positive and seemingly impartial reviews on German subjects as diverse as poetry, economics, geography, physiognomy, jurisprudence, philology, theology, anatomy and history. Its yearly and half-yearly retrospectives of German Literature on sale at the Leipzig Fair offered its readers a comprehensive list of the 'more important' German works available.[81] The retrospective of

[78] 'Half Yearly Retrospect of German Literature', p.648.
[79] Ibid., p.647.
[80] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.38
[81] 'Retrospect of the progress of German Literature during the last six months', *Monthly Magazine* (January 1801), p.614.

German Literature printed in the journal in January 1801 contained positive references to new works on Kantian philosophy as well as publications by Fichte and Schelling.[82] The retrospective for July, although not without reproach regarding quantity over quality, was certainly not 'undiscriminating', to use Ashton's term. The retrospective referred with interest to the increasing number of works on 'the philosophy of cosmo-political law', highlighting the German term '"right of nature"; for on men and nations nature has conferred rights, but not laws…But we must enumerate, not dissent.'[83] Although the final part of the sentence would suggest dissent from the German notion of natural rights, the impartiality of the mention is surely not concrete evidence of rejection or condemnation. Whether critical or otherwise, what the *Monthly Magazine* illustrated and indeed actively drew attention to was the sheer number of serious scientific and philosophical works coming out of the German states. German literature was not only mentioned but mentioned with an evident depth of knowledge and critical understanding. Though perhaps merely coincidental, it is worth noting that retrospectives were also given to publications of the two great seats of rebellion and revolution: America and France.

The continuing support of German ideas and works by liberal and radical journals might in some way explain why the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, a journal established in 1798 to root out Jacobin ideas in journals such as Joseph Johnson's *Analytical Review*, only ceased publication in 1821. Indeed, Bayard Quincy Morgan and A.R. Hohlfeld in their survey of *German Literature in British Magazines*, observe how the severity of the *Anti-Jacobin* onslaughts 'caused their opponents to concentrate their efforts, [thereby producing] a more solid appreciation of what was best in the classical German writers.'[84]

[82] Ibid., p.618.
[83] 'Half Yearly Retrospect of German Literature', p.645.
[84] Morgan and Hohlfeld (eds.), *German Literature*, p.50.

Writing on the reception of Kant in England, Vigus argues that at a time when to 'a large extent all things German' were treated with 'obscurity, scepticism, atheism and hence revolution,' the only ones attempting appraisals of Kant, and German thought in general, were 'exclusively radicals…' and those contributing to journals published by Dissenters such as Johnson and Aikin.[85] Radical publications may have been in the minority, but they played a crucial role in not only keeping German ideas alive within certain English communities but in forcing conservative elements to either condemn German ideas with greater force or to simply stop discussing them.

Far from a universal decline, therefore, Morgan and Hohlfeld's survey highlights the number of new journals and magazines that emerged from the early 1800s and that 'contributed perhaps more than any other single factor to a just appreciation of German literature in England.'[86] They list the *Edinburgh Review* (1802), the *Quarterly Review* (1809), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1817), the *London Magazine* (1820), the *Westminster Review* (1825), the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (1827) and the *Foreign Review* (1828).'[87] To this fulsome list, Ashton offers a cautionary note, however. Although writers and editors such as the essayist and friend of Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) and the Scottish writer and literary editor, John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854) contributed to the general fund of knowledge on Germany from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the reviews in these journals were by no means always favourable and certainly where Kant and the New School were concerned, their opinions were at times uncomprehending, inaccurate and prejudiced.[88] Morgan and Hohlfeld's study, like that of Ashton's, is weighted in favour of the literary. For instance, in comparison to the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* is described by Morgan and Hohlfeld as, 'not very

[85] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.36.
[86] Morgan and Hohlfeld (eds.), *German Literature*, p.50.
[87] Ibid., p.50.
[88] See Ashton, *German Idea*, p.17.

important for this investigation'.[89] Yet, a cursory glance through the pages of the *Edinburgh Magazine* from 1804 to the 1830s reveals a number of references to German works. There are few references, however, even within the literature reviews, to novelists, poets and dramatists. The main focus of the *Edinburgh Magazine* would appear to be upon scientific and theological investigation.

It is possible, therefore, to see how a historiographical survey that focuses almost entirely on reviews of literature and drama as markers of cultural importance and influence might distort the broader cultural picture. Morgan and Hohlfeld's survey contains a list of German authors and the number of times these authors were mentioned in the journals consulted. An editorial note inserted at the beginning of this list of authors explains that the absence of any names should not be taken as evidence that they were never mentioned in the journals. Omitted from their list are theological and scientific names such as the biblical scholar Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791); the theologian and orientalist Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827) and the German physiologist and anthropologist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), all of whom were mentioned and reviewed in the more liberal and radical journals.

Perhaps the most significant absentee in all of the above literary-focused studies is the *Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature* established in 1806 as a journal for Unitarians. Next to its listing in Morgan and Hohlfeld's bibliography of magazines, is the note, 'Little material.'[90] Though established later than some of the journals mentioned above, the *Repository* falls within the period of decline identified by Ashton and others and is therefore significant in any reassessment of German influence at this time. It is true that upon first glance the *Repository* would appear to contain few references to German literature. And yet, Francis Mineka in her seminal study of the Unitarian journal points out that in reviews of

[89] Morgan and Hohlfeld (eds.), *German Literature*, p.118
[90] Ibid., p.120.

German poetry alone the *Repository* 'eclipsed rival religious periodicals' of the same period.[91] The journal's interest in German publications extended to more than just poetry. Developments in German education were followed keenly. The *Repository* was the first to include a translation by Robinson of the German dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, published in April 1806.[92] And in 1827, in a favourable review of the German philosopher, Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, the journal adverted to the philosopher's translation and publishing of Plato's complete works between 1804 and 1817 in five volumes. Schleiermacher had given Germany, the reviewer remarked, 'what no other modern literature possesses, an adequate representation of the wisdom and eloquence of the founder of the Academy.'[93] It was moreover the *Repository* which, in 1821, highlighted the inexcusable neglect of German literature in England and the 'unfriendly spirit' towards it.[94] With this in mind, let us take a closer look at the *Repository* and the people to whom it appealed.

Unitarians made up a small fraction of the population of England, numbering about 50,000 by 1851.[95] On a national scale, therefore, the *Repository* would appear an insignificant journal aimed at a small sectarian minority. In the scheme of things, it was hardly a journal that the authorities need worry about. Yet, something of the clandestine politicism of the Unitarians and their journal might be inferred from Coleridge's 'Lay Sermon' of 1817, that the 'number of its [Unitarian] secret adherents, outwardly of other denominations, is tenfold greater than that of its avowed and incorporated followers…[especially]…in our cities and great manufacturing and commercial towns, among lawyers and such of the tradesfolk as are the

[91] Francis E. Mineka, *The Dissidence of Dissent: The Monthly Repository, 1806-1838* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p.115.
[92] Robinson, 'The Education of the Human Race', *Monthly Repository* (August 1806), p.412.
[93] Book Review: 'A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke', *Monthly Repository* (January 1827), p.33.
[94] 'Neglect of German Literature in England', *Monthly Repository* (August 1821), p.449.
[95] Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England*, p.4.

ruling members in book clubs.'[96] As the 'Old Unitarian' warned, 'Proselytes are eagerly received among these modern heretics without much enquiry being made into any thing [sic] beyond their faith and zeal.'[97] Clearly, the language was chosen to imply the emergence of something akin to a radical, underground cell, using the law-abiding front of the Unitarian Church for cover from which 'the canonizing of the German drama in place of the Holy Scriptures', would emerge.[98] Philp's argument of a 'social substratum' for radicalism on the margins of Rational Dissent is quite plain. The 'Old Unitarian' was confident he knew the source of this reforming zeal.

By the 1830s while growing numbers of more orthodox Unitarians were distancing themselves from what was becoming an increasingly political and non-sectarian journal, the editor of the *Repository*, Fox, and the main focus of the Old Unitarian's attack, hailed, with perhaps a little bravado, the 'rapid growth of public encouragement' for the journal.[99] To the more old-fashioned Unitarian, sensitive to allegations of Jacobinism and fearful of further or renewed discrimination, Fox's unorthodox and radical opinions, and too his support of serious German works seemed to attract people who placed soical reform above religion and creed. Between 1830 and 1832 Fox published a series of reviews on the works of the German philosopher and theologian, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Amongst these were reviews written between January and April of 1832 by the Unitarian and German scholar John James Taylor on Herder's *Thoughts on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784). Taylor refers to Herder's interest in social reform and from this his interest in the history of the human species.[100] But anyone choosing from this to consult T. Churchill's earlier 1800 abridged translation of Herder's *History* would be able to note the importance of

[96] Mineka, *Dissidence of Dissent*, p.25.
[97] 'An Old Unitarian', *Monthly Repository* (May 1817), p.287.
[98] Ibid., p.40.
[99] William Johnson Fox, 'A letter to the Rev. - -, Unitarian Minister of -, from the Editor of the 'Monthly Repository', *Monthly Repository* (January 1833), p.347.
[100] John James Taylor, 'Herder's Thoughts on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind', *Monthly Repository* (January 1832), p.35.

Greek thought and in particular Platonism on the subject. They might also note the German philosopher's assertion that a 'rational education…placed woman on a level with man'. [101] That Fox was perhaps a pivotal figure in the promotion of German works in the journal, and too the focus of the Old Unitarian's ire, might be indicated by Fox's letter to Robinson in 1815, asking for information about 'German books'.[102] But what was it that drew heterodox radicals in England to German ideas and German centres of learning?

German Centres of Learning

Prior to 1871 Germany was a collection of independent states, emerging from the slow dying embers of the Holy Roman Empire. Set in motion by the Protestant Reformation and subsequent religious and territorial wars from thereon in, the varying Germanic states within the Empire, and increasingly Prussia and Austria, competed for 'recognition as [independent] powers' on the European stage. Despite this rivalry and the politico-religious differences that existed within and between the Protestant and Catholic states, there remained between these, 'a common consciousness of unity', driven in part by 'a common language, upon common historical experiences and traditions and upon common cultural values.' This 'consciousness of unity', Peter Wende argues, would grow ever stronger over the course of the eighteenth century, leading by the turn of the nineteenth century to the 'beginnings of a national discourse'.[103] This discourse emerged first amongst the intellectual elite.

Territorial borders may have divided one German from another, but there were few such borders intellectually. The German states may have been divided in constitution, religion and politics but intellectually there would appear to have been little division or conflict. The seeds of unification and nationalism, according to Wende and Robert Gildea were nurtured in the

[101] John Godfrey Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, translated by T. Churchill (London, J. Johnson, 1800), p.213.
[102] See Margaret Rachel Parnaby, 'William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle of 1832 to 1836' (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1979), p.154.
[103] Peter Wende, *A History of Germany* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.72.

non-partisan and non-sectarian universities, amongst intellectuals who looked in part to the more democratic and meritocratic model of France but importantly saw Germans as the natural and uncorrupted inheritors of the causes of freedom and equality.[104] For these, a unified Germany required the rational engagement of its people. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the sovereignty of the various German States was increasingly ignored by German universities and, according to Wende, 'even questioned and endangered'. Intellectuals working within the protective walls of academia emerged as potential threats to whatever status quo still existed within the varying states. To 'political traditionalists…[and]…enlightened absolutists,' nationalists had become 'dangerous revolutionaries.'[105] And the effects of revolution were felt most in the French armies of newly liberated people who swept through the German states looking to spread the new Republic's revolutionary principles.[106] Transformation and reform within affected and occupied German states occurred, however, not so much through the principles of the French Revolution as from the need to cope with the changes that came as a result of the 'redrawing of the political map of Central Europe.' German governments were keen to ensure that any political and social reform came from above rather than below. The nature and appearance of those reforms depended initially on whether a German state such as Bavaria had gained territory as part of the Confederation of the Rhine, or like Prussia after the Treaty of Tilsit, had lost it.[107]

In looking for reasons as to why English heterodox radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent might be attracted to German intellectual institutions, comparisons between Prussia and England are illuminating. The absolutist Prussian response to the rise of democratic movements was more pragmatic and less dictatorial than that experienced in a supposedly more democratic England. The English response to revolution and war was largely

[104] Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), p.55.
[105] Wende, *A History of Germany*, p.82.
[106] Ibid., p.76.
[107] Ibid., pp.78-79.

protectionist, conservative and uncompromising, informed by the desire to maintain the status quo. Although it would be unfair to argue that the English were not concerned deeply by France's expansionist policies; unlike Prussia, England's socio-political and economic status was not fundamentally affected by revolution, or by the sweeping ideological and territorial advances of revolutionary and Napoleonic France. The attitudes to educational reform between England and Prussia are particularly interesting. According to George Haines, both England and Prussia were under increasing pressure to readjust educational provision to suit the changing needs of society and the growing demands of the emerging middle classes. Influenced by war and invasion, Haines describes the solution for educational reform in Prussia as 'carefully conceived and rigorously executed.' The same could not be said for England. Lacking the same urgency or incentive, educational reform in England was erratic and piecemeal, witnessing a 'variety of individually conceived and variously executed plans, a succession of commissions investigating and reporting, followed generally by indifference or neglect.' The *laisse faire* attitude of the English, according to Haines, could in large part be attributed to the intimate and interested relationship between state and church. Where in Prussia an 'autocratic prince' was able to control and weaken the church's monopoly over education; in England, the church and state were inextricably entwined. Supported by legislation such as the Test and Corporation Acts, Anglicanism held sway over much of the educational system, including the great boarding schools and the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford. It was the 'bulwark of the aristocracy and the Conservatives.'[108]

Yet Prussia's stance had not always been so progressive. Prior to 1789, the Prussian response to radical or heterodox ideas was not dissimilar to that of William Pitt's Government in the 1790s. Concerns over the flow of French Enlightenment ideas into Prussia and the growth of unbelief and scepticism in the decade before revolution resulted in a clash between religious

[108] George Haines, *German Influence Upon English Education and Science 1800-1866* (New London, Connecticut, Connecticut College, 1957), pp.7-8.

parties and the Prussian state. An Edict was subsequently passed in 1788 by Friedrich Wilhelm II, stating that all acts of worship and religious instruction were to conform to the rules of the established church. Theological debate and inquiry beyond that sanctioned by the state was suppressed. Intellectuals faced the dilemma of upholding their duty to the state while maintaining their intellectual integrity. In 1794, Kant was banned from giving public lectures on religion after publishing *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.[109] But with the French advancing across Germany, the Edict was repealed in 1797 on the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm III as part of a modernising and reforming programme. Appreciating only too well how revolution in France had opened the intellectual floodgates and how the chaos and upheaval of war were already having a significant impact, pragmatists in Prussia believed that it would be impossible to reject or suppress all claims for reform without serious consequences. Free to speak out once again, in 1798, the year that Coleridge enrolled at Göttingen University, Kant issued a strong caveat to any who would seek to impede freedom of thought and intellectual inquiry:

> It is absolutely essential that the learned community at the university also contain a faculty that is independent of the government's command with regard to its teachings; one that, having no commands to give, is free to evaluate everything, and concerns itself with the interests of the sciences, that is, with truth: one in which reason is authorized to speak out publicly. For without a faculty of this kind, the truth would not come to light (and this would be to the government's own detriment); but reason is by its nature free and admits of no command to hold something as true (no imperative "Believe!" but only a free "I believe").[110]

With the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1806, Prussia's territory and power were significantly diminished. Survival depended on a new and innovative approach. That

[109] Elinor S. Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy and the Organization of the Disciplines: The Founding of the Humboldt University of Berlin', in Cunningham and Jardine (eds.), *Romanticism and the sciences*, p.39.
[110]Emmanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, translation and introduction by Mary J. Gregor (Lincoln, USA and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp.28-29.

approach was education. For Friedrich Wilhelm III, what the state had lost in 'material power', it would replace with 'intellectual power'.[111]

For England, with its geographical isolation and growing global dominion, there was no such pressing need to instigate urgent or radical intellectual reform. A raft of peremptory legal measures had succeeded, on the surface at least, in suppressing militant radicalism. But as will become increasingly apparent, it was English students matriculating at German universities and the promotion and development of German educational methods and ideas in England that for some posed a greater threat to socio-political stability than any territorial threat posed by France. To understand why this might have been, it is necessary to take a closer look at the system of education used in German universities.

German Universities and Reform

In England, those looking for 'intellectual liberty',[112] and more, followed the progress of German educational reform with eagerness. German universities were at the forefront of a new interdisciplinary system of higher education. Göttingen University was a shining example of the Enlightenment ethos of free thought and enquiry, maintained by the state and unimpeded by sectarian interests.[113] Founded in 1737 by George II of Britain and Prince-elector of Hanover, being a vassal of the British Empire did not appear to impede the type and style of education pursued in its corridors. By the end of the eighteenth century, Göttingen was renowned as one of the greatest universities in Europe and one of the best institutions in which to study science. Students were attracted in particular to the lectures of Blumenbach.

[111] Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy', p.38.
[112] See p.137.
[113] See Michael Tierney, 'The Revolution in the German University', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 26, no. 103 (Sep., 1937), pp.355-356.

It was the founding of Berlin University in 1809, however, which represented a new and important phase in the development of German higher education. A new system of teaching was introduced that sought to unify the hitherto conflicting disciplines of knowledge – religious and secular - under the one *Wissenschaftslehre* (Science of Knowledge). Philosophy was at the centre of this new system. A once 'lower faculty', philosophy was placed controversially above the once 'higher faculties' of theology, law and medicine, as the intellectual and ideological linchpin.[114] Philosophy alone was critical and independent, while the other faculties were dependent upon 'authority'. And along with philosophy came its 'old appendage' history, which, according to Beiser, held the 'key to understanding human beings'.[115] History was able to shine a light upon human endeavour and ideas in the past, linking these to the present and to the future.[116] As such, history was given the status of a science. Founders of the German historicist tradition, the jurist and social theorist Justus Möser (1720-1794), the philosopher and theologian Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and the philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), argued that rather than eternal and constant, human nature was plastic.[117] The notion of human plasticity, identified in Kant and Platonism, would come to underpin the German professorial system. In his memorandum *On the Spirit and the Organizational Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin,* Humboldt argued that in the universities *Wissenschaft* (Science) did not 'consist of close bodies of permanently settled truths.' Unlike schools where 'finished bodies of knowledge' were presented to students, in universities there was to be no such fixity. The overarching objective of a University degree was to teach the art of independent thought and critical inquiry.[118] The founding of Berlin University[119] was merely the culmination of a

[114] Ibid., pp.38-39.
[115] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.12-13.
[116] Dietrich von Engelhardt, 'Historical consciousness in the German Romantic Naturforschung', in Cunningham and Jardine (eds.), *Romanticism and the Sciences*, p.55.
[117] Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, pp.12-13.
[118] Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy', p.51.

long-standing and fiercely maintained tradition of German intellectual independence. Echoing the sentiments of Kant, Humboldt wrote:

> The state must always remain conscious of the fact that it never has and in principle never can, by its own action, bring about the fruitfulness of intellectual activity. It must indeed be aware that it can only have a prejudicial influence if it intervenes. The state must understand the intellectual work will go on infinitely better if it does not intrude.[120]

Lecturing on the history of philosophy in 1819, Coleridge highlighted the numerous advantages held by German universities, the most notable of which was their essentially meritocratic nature. Hailing the similarities between the two cultures, Coleridge described how 'the learned or studied men [in German universities] formed a sort of middle class of society correspondent to our middle class…' Yet, the absence not only of religion and class but of nationality within German institutions made them, in stark contrast to their English counterparts, communities of impartial 'Cosmopolites'.[121] The German university offered an example of a community or a republic of knowledge that transcended cultural and national interests and rivalries for the good of the broader international community. The same could not be said of Oxford or Cambridge at this time.

It would be a further seventeen years before England accepted a similar undertaking in the form of a secular institution from which degrees might be awarded, but even then plans for the new university in London, as will be discussed below, were less radical and progressive than is sometimes suggested. Where the intellectual and practical framework of Berlin University was driven by an urgent desire for reform, the founding of the University of London[122] in 1826 was driven in part by a quite different set of criteria and motivations.

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[119] Berlin University would become Humboldt University in 1949.
[120] Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy', p.51.
[121] Coleridge, 'Lecture 13, 22nd March,1819'.
[122] Later changed to University College London (UCL).

It would of course be wrong to ignore the role of dissenting academies in England, which did provide post-elementary educations for non-Anglican boys. Daventry, Warrington, Hoxton, and, after the closure of these, New College Hackney and Manchester Academy, were known for providing liberal, high quality educations. Of these, Warrington was regarded as the most outstanding of its kind. Unlike many dissenting academies founded to provide suitable candidates for the ministry, Warrington was established on the grounds of providing a secular education, with focus placed upon science, languages and history. Some of the most famous figures in Rational Dissent taught at Warrington, including Priestley; the biblical scholar and religious controversialist Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), and the classicist and theological scholar and father to Aikin and Barbauld, John Aikin Sr. (1713-1780). Yet, despite this, as David Wykes' recent study of dissenting academies reveals, by the late eighteenth century many of these establishments were in decline. Warrington closed in 1782 and its replacement academy, Hackney, closed in 1796. Both institutions cited financial difficulties but, as Wykes points out, underlying both closures were serious doubts about the principles of the institutions.[123] Like much schooling in England at the time, dissenting academies were prey to the fickleness of the consumer market, financial instability and, as was quite common where teacher training did not exist, the capricious nature of suitable staff. For many dissenting academies, the fears and instability engendered by the French Revolution and the central role played by some of the star tutors of these academies, most notably Priestly, Price and Wakefield, only added to the precariousness of their status. Manchester College was the only one of these key dissenting academies to survive into the nineteenth century, bolstered by its move to York in 1803 and by later concessions to Rational Dissenters after 1813. But as Wykes observes, despite Warrington being established as a non-sectarian institution to rival Cambridge and Oxford, none of these institutions provided real competition, lacking the

[123] David L. Wykes, 'The Dissenting academy and Rational Dissent', in Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion*, pp.131-132.

means adequately to expand or to accommodate the advances that were taking place in German institutions.[124] In its lifetime, between 1757 and 1782, Warrington – the largest and most successful academy - educated 393 students, a fraction of those educated at the two English universities. According to Wykes, many of the students at Warrington and elsewhere proceeded to Cambridge or Oxford and those who wished to preserve their non-conformist principles, travelled to Scotland or abroad.[125] But before we take a closer look at the establishment of the first English university designed to rival Oxford and Cambridge and indeed its German counterparts, I want first to consider the role of higher education in Scotland prior to this and the connections with German institutions.

The Scottish Intermediary

If German influence declined in England from the turn of the nineteenth century, its presence amongst heterodox radicals was kept alive in part through Scotland and Scottish Universities.[126] Religious differences arising out of the Reformation, the Glorious Revolution and later the Act of Union would have a marked bearing on the nature of and propensity for international relations in England and Scotland. It is owing in part to these key differences that England, rather than Scotland, is described more aptly as insular. Scotland's Calvinist and non-episcopal national Church had more in common with the Lutheran Protestantism of Germany than it did with the Church of England. Although the Lutheran Doctrine was still dominant in much of Protestant Germany, a retrospective of German literature published in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1804, alluded to a growing ecumenism and a lack of any real distinction in the public mind 'betwixt the writings of Lutheran and Calvinist divines, on dogmatics or morality…'[127] Theological and ideological similarities between Scotland and the German Protestant states allowed arguably for a far easier exchange of ideas, students and

[124] Ibid., p.134.
[125] Ibid., p.135.
[126] Haines, *German Influence Upon English Education*, pp.5-6
[127] 'Retrospect of German Literature', *Monthly Magazine* (July 1804), p.674.

professors between their respective universities. In contrast, as Haines explains, with the Anglican monopolisation of education and with no 'affiliations with religious groups outside British dominions', English universities were 'particularly insulated against foreign influences'. In contrast, Calvinists and other Dissenting faiths had international affiliations.[128] Like their German counterparts, Scottish Universities did not discriminate against Protestant Dissenters from either the Scottish or the English Church.

Moreover, Scottish intellectuals had 'since time immemorial' looked to universities in the Low Countries, France and Germany for inspiration, training and collaboration.[129] The Dutch University of Leyden attracted the lion's share of Scottish and Dissenting students up until the 1790s, whereupon the balance shifted in favour of German universities and most notably Göttingen.[130] The Scottish Enlightenment, however, helped to secure the reputation of Scottish Universities as amongst the best in Europe. A contributor to the *Repository* in 1827 remarked on how, 'for a population not a quarter of that of England', Scotland had more than double the number of Universities.[131] It is notable, too, that Scotland in 1796 played host to the first co-educational university, founded on the dying wish of the natural philosopher and lecturer at the University of Glasgow, John Anderson (1726-1796), who had ties with the Lunar Society through both Thomas Garnett (1766-1802), the first professor of natural philosophy to teach at Anderson's coeducational college and the Scottish engineer, James Watt (1736-1819).[132]

The decision of Scottish universities after 1707 to endorse the continental system of professorial teaching over that of the English collegiate and tutorial system is evidence, too, of their cosmopolitan affiliations and of their rejection of the hierarchical, top-down system

[128] Haines, *German Influence Upon English Education*, pp.5-6
[129] Thomas M. Devine, 'Alexander Geddes: The Scottish Context', in William Johnstone (ed.), The Bible and the Enlightenment (London, T&T Clark International, 2002), p.36.
[130] Devine, 'Alexander Geddes', p.36.
[131] 'On a Scientific Education and the University of London', *Monthly Repository* (March 1827), p.162.
[132] See Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman', pp.521-522.

of English higher education. In the continental system lectures replaced tutorials, with the onus placed on the student to attend and not upon the professor to nurture or control, as critics variously viewed the collegiate system.[133] The cosmopolitan and less sectarian stance of Scottish universities allowed for a sustained level of cultural and intellectual integration beyond its geo-political borders that simply did not occur to anything like the same degree in England with its rigid class system and prescribed, if not always enforced, religious penalties. Religious segregation in England not only hampered international collaboration; it placed restrictions upon the collaboration between English Dissenters and Anglicans as well. It was this religious segregation and division that would hamper the design and development of the secular London University. A speech by the non-conformist biographer, Walter Wilson, printed in the *Repository* in 1823, asserted that:

> the oppression to which they [dissenters] have been so long subject in this respect, has so far tinctured the prejudices of society, as to occasion an artificial circle to be drawn around them, excluding them very much from the intercourse of life with persons of a similar station in the Established Church.'[134]

Oxford and Cambridge demanded that all students swear oaths of supremacy and allegiance to the Anglican Church. Oxford even forbade its students from communicating with 'dissidents from the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England.'[135] As Haines observes, 'England had a national church which encouraged insularity of some of her best minds and which was yet not national in any genuine sense.'[136] Indeed, it can be argued that it encouraged many of the best minds outside of the national church to look abroad for influence and inspiration, leading to suspicions of disloyalty. In comparison to their Scottish

[133] Bellot H. Hale, *University College London 1826-1926* (London, University of London Press, 1929), p.9.
[134] Walter Wilson, 'An Essay on the Causes of the Decline of Nonconformity', *Monthly Repository* (July 1823), p.394; Mineka, *Dissidence of Dissent*, p.22.
[135] Hale, *University College London*, pp.5-6. Oxford students had to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, as well as taking the Oath of Supremacy. These then had to be repeated in order to receive the final degree. Though no such tests were necessary to enter Cambridge, the awards of BA, BCL or BM were dependent upon subscription and oath.
[136] Haines, *German Influence upon English Education*, pp.7-8.

and German counterparts, the two English universities were parochial, which lends some weight to Himmelfarb's description of English insularity. The custom moreover in public and private schools, as well as at the universities, certainly prior to the 1820s, of teaching little else but a limited and censored selection of the classics to all regardless of talent or inclination, meant that educational experience was significantly different from that in Scotland and Germany, where a far broader range of subjects, including the sciences, were taught.

For those English Dissenters who could afford it, Scottish universities provided access to the latest ideas and methods coming out of German and continental universities.[137] Robinson was convinced that the first disciples of an English translation of Kant's *Criticism of Pure Reason* would be 'of the Scotch school.'[138] It was initially through Scottish universities and particularly Edinburgh - described by the Danish-German historian and former student, Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831), as 'The Athens of the North' - that Kant, as the preparer of Plato, first became known in Britain in the 1780s.[139] The philosopher and professor at Edinburgh Dugald Stewart (1753-1828) might in some respects be described as an early disseminator of Kant's philosophy even if, as Michael Brown argues, the Scotsman 'misread and disliked' the philosophy. [140] A number of the heterodox radicals in this thesis studied at Scottish universities and in particular Edinburgh. Beddoes and John Aikin (Jr) are perhaps the most notable.

It was also through Scottish links with German universities that the growing interest in phrenology in England emerged, certainly amongst radical groups such as the Owenites and Carlile's 'Zetetic' circle. Promoted by the German physician Johann Gaspar Spurzheim

[137] For those such as Priestley, unable to afford travel to Scotland or abroad, dissenting academies were the best alternative. See Schofield, 'Priestley, Joseph (1733-1804)'.
[138] Robinson, 'Letters on the Philosophy of Kant', p.414.
[139] Haines, *German Influence upon English Education*, p.6.
[140] Michael P. Brown, 'Stewart, Dugald (1753-1828)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 24/08/2018.

(1776-1832), who was the estranged collaborator of the German anatomist Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828), the originator of the discipline, phrenology was taken up by the Scottish phrenologist George Combe (1788-1858) whose most famous work, *The Constitution of Man* (1828) helped to put the new science of mind on the intellectual map in Britain.[141] Although emerging in Britain a little later, phrenology coincided with the heterodox interpretation of psychological androgyny and if it claimed to be able to identify innate mental characteristics in comparison to the concept of androgyny which made no such claims, the two were nonetheless part of the same desire to understand human origins and development.

The Attractions of German Scientific and Theological Debate

The overwhelming focus on Romantic literature and art has tended to obscure the strong scientific bias exhibited by many English students who studied at German universities. Haines' study of German influence on English education and science notes an increase in the number of English students traveling to Germany to complete their scientific education from the mid-1830s. This is consistent with evidence collected by Watts on Unitarian educational practices of the same time.[142] Both studies would appear to support a comment made in 1836 by the historian Lucy Aikin (1781-1864), the daughter of Aikin and niece of Barbauld, who wrote that 'Germany…is a school in which numbers of our young men are learning lessons…'[143] Prior to the 1830s, Haines registers a mere handful of English students matriculating at German universities. This would certainly tally with Robinson's observation that while studying at Jena between 1802 and 1805 he was for much of the time the only English student.[144] Without access to the attendance records of these German universities, it is of course impossible to say how many English students there were. It is impossible also to

[141] See J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.239-240.
[142] Haines, *German Influence upon English Education*, p.94; Watts, 'The Unitarian Contribution to Education', p.41.
[143] Lucy Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the late Lucy Aikin*, ed. by Philip Hemery Le Breton, (London, Longman, Green, Longman, Robers and Green, 1864), p.342.
[144] Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence*, p.131.

say whether the number of English students differed according to the discipline. As with other comparative studies of this period, Haines' focus is again narrow. Although the sciences were important, by focusing upon science and medicine to the exclusion of other disciplines, it is possible that Haines' data does not represent the entire picture. Despite alluding to the flexible nature of academic disciplines at this time, Haines' study sticks to a twentieth-century interpretation of science: he does not include, for example, the 'science of theology'. Alongside Blumenbach, Göttingen could claim amongst its members of staff two of Germany's greatest theological luminaries, Michaelis and Eichhorn. Science and theology were by no means warring subjects, as demonstrated by many of the heterodox radicals in this study who used advancing studies in both disciplines to develop their understanding of human nature and the unsexed mind.[145] It was certainly not unusual for students of theology to take classes in a variety of scientific disciplines, as this extract on studying for clerical office published in the *Repository* illustrates:

> …before they begin the study of theology, they must attend the professors of Greek and Latin literature, mathematics, physics, metaphysics and logic, and general history…all this being done they are allowed to enter on theology…[146]

In his *Retrospective on the Religious life of England*, published in 1845, John James Tayler described how 'over the course of twenty-five years…many of the present generation of ministers among the Dissenters have received a part of their education in [German] Universities.'[147] What 'part' of their education this was, Tayler did not make clear, although we might assume it was theological in nature. Tayler did not provide any indication of numbers either, but what his confident assertion would appear to suggest is that by the early

[145] See Frederick Gregory, 'Theology and the sciences in the German Romantic period', in Cunningham and Jardine (eds.) *Romanticism and the Sciences*, pp.69-81.
[146] 'On the Mythical Interpretation of the Bible, from Jahn's Biblical Archaeology,' *Monthly Repository* (September 1827), p.634. We might note parallels between this and Coleridge's plan for post-graduate studies for clergymen penned in his notebook in 1810. Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol.3, 3934.
[147] John James Tayler, *A Retrospective on the Religious Life of England* (London, 1845), p.463.

1820s, 'many' had benefited from German educations. Aikin's reference to 'numbers' of students studying in German universities would itself suggest a figure large enough to be worthy not only of notice but of the continued paranoia voiced by conservatives. Aikin's comments would also suggest that even with the establishment of the University of London in 1826, the reputation of and preference for German universities remained high amongst English Rational Dissenters, most probably on account of the freedom to explore theological and scientific disputes without censure. Writing in the 1830s, Aikin referred to a male acquaintance of hers who a number of years previously had returned from Germany full of 'admiration of the freedom of a German university, where all varieties of opinion are represented by one professor or another, and the students may attend whichever they please'.[148]

The New University of London

On paper, the opening of the non-sectarian and more scientifically-oriented University of London in 1826 had the potential to stem the flow of English students to German universities. As Ashton points out, there were no religious barriers or tests to students or tutors entering the new university which, in comparison to the rules operating at Cambridge and Oxford, represented a quite radical break.[149] Yet, despite its much-promoted status as a centre for non-sectarian learning, offering a more comprehensive and scientific syllabus with professors from Scotland and Germany, the new university in some fundamental respects reflected the conservative and protectionist attitudes of the English establishment. The founding of the University of London was in many respects driven by the desire to contain rather than encourage freedom of thought and debate and most significantly in matters of religion. Ashton describes the decision amongst the founders of the university to 'exclude theological

[148] Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters*, p.342.
[149] Rosemary Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2012), p.26.

teaching' as 'radical and contentious'.[150] It was indeed contentious, but it was not nearly as radical as Ashton describes. Arguably, it was the very exclusion of 'theological teaching' that would fail to stem the flow of inquisitive English students to German universities. Unlike its German counterparts there was no single department of theology at the University of London dedicated to the open and critical study of religion. Instead, individual sectarian schools were set up outside the college to cater for religious differences, as this extract from the *Repository* clearly demonstrates:

> …the University of London was obliged to leave the teaching of religion to be provided for by each sect in conformity with its own views of the sacred subject. The obvious expedient…is that the leading denominations of Christians should establish theological schools, each for itself, consisting of as many chairs as it might deem expedient, with merely such a local connexion with the University, as might enable those who were studying at the one to resort conveniently to the other. Such young men as were destined for Dissenting ministers would begin with the literary and scientific studies at the University, and when the course of those disciplines was at its close…they would resort to the appropriate schools of divinity, and would continue their attendance on such as they might choose of the lectures in the University…[151]

This was certainly no ringing endorsement of Kant's assertion that the student and intellectual should be 'free to evaluate everything'.[152] Few in England, according to Haines, were 'willing to pay the necessary price for the reform of the schools on German lines'. Apart from 'a handful of radicals and leaders like Lord Brougham…even those reformers who were not party Whigs had no wish to alter the old institutional structure of English life'.[153] This in itself would indicate the radicalness of the heterodox position on learning and on the unsexed mind. There was to be no critical enquiry into the merits or justification of the

[150] Ibid., p.26.
[151] 'On Scientific Education and the University of London', *Monthly Repository* (March 1827), p.170.
[152] Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, pp.28-29.
[153] Haines, *German Influence upon English Education*, pp.27-28.

Anglican establishment. This was perhaps most evident in the decision made by the new university to follow the collegiate system of teaching. English Universities, including London, were more accurately described as, 'colleges rather than universities in the Continental sense'.[154] Haines refers to Michael Sadler's argument that where 'Humboldt's reform was revolutionary; the English reform was guided by the spirit of Burke.'[155] That is, towards the maintenance of tradition and the status quo. The collegiate system, which presented 'finished bodies of knowledge',[156] offered less intellectual freedom, it would seem, than the more Socratic professorial system in Scotland or on the continent. In England, students were treated as dependent minors rather than independent adults.

To any who might question the collegiate system, conservatives had only to raise the spectre of rowdy German students to demonstrate how communities of 'Cosmopolites' might abuse their independent status. In the summer of 1818, fights broke out between students of Göttingen University and men from a neighbouring village. An article in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in May 1819 described how:

> A German student is at this moment a very formidable animal, as the assignation of poor Kotzebue, among other things, may shew. That, with all their moodiness and morbid enthusiasm, they are capable too of combination, and of uniting in cool and deliberate plans, the narrative which we now present to our readers will prove clearly. What may be the political consequences of such a body of young desperadoes spread over the face of a country like Germany, in which there are so many inflammable materials, it is difficult at present to foresee.[157]

[154] Ibid., pp.27-28.
[155] Ibid., pp.27-28.
[156] Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy', p.51.
[157] 'Göttingen during the Summer of 1818', *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (May 1819), p.394.

German students, the correspondent explained, had always had their own laws and, as such, their liberties were 'almost unlimited'.[158] The assassination of Kotzebue by a student in 1819, alluded to in the above extract, was enough to sight evidence of systemic failures. Several articles in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in the same year charted with a mixture of fascination and horror the rise of radical nationalistic and democratic fervour in Germany, given voice through the *Burschenshaft* (fraternity of students).[159] For many, the adoption of the German professorial system in England, in which students were answerable to few but themselves, posed a genuine threat to social order.[160] Concerns over the libertarian nature of German education had been raised in two articles printed by the *Anti-Jacobin Review* nineteen years earlier. Between 1799 and 1800 James Walker, the author of these alarmist articles, resided in the city of Weimar. Despite, it would appear, never travelling beyond Weimar, Walker was able to describe *all* German Universities as hotbeds of radicalism and atheism. Jena students were described 'almost to a man, republicans…' Their atheistical professors were led by the infamous 'Furchte [sic], professor of philosophy, or, rather *philosophism'*. Of even greater concern was the knowledge that English students studying at Göttingen had 'lost every sense of delicacy, every notion of morality and religion, and every emotion of patriotism'. No names were mentioned but it was clear that Coleridge was one of those students, using his in-depth knowledge of the 'German school', to facilitate 'the eradication of British prejudices'.[161] With Coleridge at that stage not only a noted radical but a noted Unitarian, the reference to the lack of patriotism lends support to evidence that the majority of the students travelling to German universities were from radical and Rational Dissenting communities.

[158] Ibid., p.394.
[159] Ibid., pp.394-398; 'Göttingen during the Summer of 1818', (June 1819), pp.514-522; 'Biographical Sketch of the Life of Augstus von Kotzebue', (June 1819), pp.509-514.
[160] Ibid., p.509.
[161] Vigus, *Platonic Coleridge*, p.37.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that suggestions made by Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), the Scottish poet and co-founder of the University of London, to structure the university along German lines should be greeted with such little enthusiasm by his co-founders, many of whom were Anglican. According to Haines, Campbell's trip to Berlin University and his subsequent suggestions were received with distinct suspicion.[162] There is, however, no obvious reference to this suspicion in William Beattie's editing of Campbell's letters, from which Haines derived his information.[163] The only obvious conflict acknowledged in Campbell's letters arose over whether the new university of London should be an institution for Dissenters only. On this matter, its Anglican co-founders were clear; if the university was not to be a secular institution then it would have to be Anglican. A national university could not be allowed to dissent openly from the national Church and the beliefs of England's ruling elite. Religious instruction would be private or Anglican. In the orthodox English mind, it was the encouragement of independent and critical thought amongst German students, and especially students of theology, that led not only to atheism but to the anomie of democratic republicanism and the rejection of the very principles of patriarchy; those stabilising hierarchies of class, creed, race and sex. In 1793, Godwin observed of public education in England that, 'we study Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas or Bellarmine or chief justice Coke, not that we may detect their errors, but that our minds may be fully impregnated with their absurdities. This feature runs through every species of public establishment; and even in the petty institution of Sunday schools.' And one of the chief lessons taught was 'a superstitious veneration for the church of England.'[164] 'An individual surrenders the best attribute of man,' Godwin argued, 'the moment he resolves to adhere to certain fixed principles, for reasons not now present to his mind, but which formerly were. The instant in which he shuts

[162] Haines, *German Influence upon English Education*, p.15.
[163] William Beattie, *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (London, 1850), pp.438-464.
[164] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.351.

upon himself the career of enquiry, is the instant of his intellectual decease.'[165] In German universities, critical theological enquiry was encouraged and with it critical assessments of 'fixed principles' and practices. In 1836 Lucy Aikin observed that 'in our universities "German Theology" is a word of fear and reproach.'[166] It is perhaps significant that Aikin made no distinction between the Anglican Universities (Oxford, Cambridge and King's College, London, founded in 1828) and the one secular London University (UCL).

In 1799, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* warned its readers that the main source of political and social contagion came no longer from France but from German universities:[167]

> Ninety-nine in every hundred of literary men in Germany, or of men who assume that appellation, either are, or have been, professors in the different Universities. Electrified, at first, by French principles…they espoused all its extravagant doctrines, and propagate them, with the zeal of converts, and the fury of bigots. [168]

The reason for this lay in the apparently untrammelled intellectual freedoms enjoyed by German professors and their students. Although Englishmen might pride themselves on their greater political freedoms; Germans could lay claim to greater intellectual freedoms. Writing in 1828 about the dull and suppressed state of theological investigation in England, the Unitarian John Bowring recalled how a German professor had remarked to him that 'you boast of your *civil* liberty, but must come thither to learn what *intellectual* liberty is. Your politicians may have freedom of spirit, but your theologians have no freedom of mind.'[169] This intellectual liberty was amply catered for in the increasingly world-renowned

[165] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.351.
[166] Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters*, pp.432-433.
[167] 'Preface', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (September 1799), pp.vii-viii
[168] 'Remarks on the Present State of the Press in Foreign Countries', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (December 1798), pp.728-729.
[169] Mineka, *Dissidence of Dissent*, p.212.

universities that, according to one enthusiast, abounded throughout the German states, bringing knowledge within reach of 'a great proportion of the population'.[170]

For Germans and English heterodox radicals, the science of knowledge necessitated the study of theology, because as Coleridge and the *Repository* reviewer of Jahn's *Biblical Archaeology* both highlighted, it was through theological comparison and the appreciation of the connections with philosophy that knowledge and the truth would be attained. Hints about the origins of humankind were to be found in a rigorous and open study of theology. Any student wishing to 'dive into Christian antiquities, [knew well], Aikin argued, 'that their main reliance must be on the guidance of German down-diggers.' Aikin, however, went straight to the nub of the matter when she wondered whether German theologians might be, 'destined once more to produce a revolution in religion?'[171] It is important to remember that the 1820s witnessed increasingly heated debates over Roman Catholic emancipation and the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Allegiance and loyalty to the state should not, it was argued, be subject to an oath and the taking of the Anglican sacraments. Protestant Dissenters felt that they had proved their loyalty through the many years of instability and war. In a particularly pointed article published in the *Repository* the year before the Test and Corporation Acts were finally repealed in 1828, a reviewer of *Biblical Archaeology* by the Catholic orientalist Johann Jahn hailed German universities as genuine forums of equality, democracy and ecumenism. The German university was described as:

> a school for all, without distinction of creed, and all studies which are of a general kind are carried on in common. This association with those of a different belief has produced the most striking and beneficial effects on the minds of the Catholics, both students and professors. Placed in the centre of knowledge and investigation, their academical teachers have felt how futile it would be to endeavour to stop their progress by appealing to

[170] 'On Scientific Education and the University of London', p.162.
[171] Ibid., pp.432-433.

> authority, or to contend against the new opinions which Protestant critics were diffusing, except by the same weapons of learning and argument which they employed. They made themselves masters of all the improvements in theological science, and examined every argument of the neologists according to their own merit, instead of denouncing them from the pulpit or the altar.[172]

In so far as religion was concerned, the truly secular German university was held up as a microcosm of a civilised and egalitarian society; a position with which the editors and contributors of the increasingly secular *Repository* felt growing sympathy. Similar sentiments were voiced by the German theologian Professor Sack in a letter to the Rev. E.P. Pusey published in the *Repository* in 1828. Rebutting accusations made by the Anglican clergyman Hugh James Rose (1795-1838), over the parlous state of Protestantism in Germany, and in turn criticising the too rigid state of the Anglican Church, Sack argued that if German 'principles are grounded on faith in the Spirit of Christ, should they abandon them in the midst of their career, and recur to those which centre on a reliance upon the letter of the human form, and upon the restraining force of the law?'[173] As Sack pointed out, if 'many of those scientific men who went furthest in a superficial and forced interpretation of the sacred documents, belonged to the philosophical faculties of our universities', it was but part of the desire for 'a noble and genuine freedom of mind…in which scientific clearness and freedom were the object of honest exertion.'[174] Perhaps echoing the sentiments of Kant, Sack explained that since the mid eighteenth century it had:

> been a principle to allow science to speak out entirely unrestrained, even in opposition to the doctrine of the church, in the confidence that the theological faculty, through greater depth, or the greater correctness of its point of view, would be able to counterpoise…[175]

[172] 'Mythical Interpretation of the Bible,' *Monthly Repository* (September 1827), p.634.
[173] 'Professor Sack's View of Religion in Germany', *Monthly Repository* (August, 1828), p.525.
[174] Ibid., pp.526-527.
[175] Ibid., p.526.

In other words, theological debate was a crucial part of the intellectual, evolutionary and progressive process. It was a thinly veiled attack on the credibility and viability of the Anglican Church, whose policies of discrimination and exclusion were surely those of an institution which was itself in a parlous state. In stark contrast to England, German universities encouraged Catholic scholars to study and publish critical analyses alongside their Protestant colleagues, promoting the stabilising benefits of collective knowledge and toleration. The *Repository* review of Jahn's *Biblical Archaeology* made a point of praising the efforts of the renegade Scottish Catholic priest and biblical scholar, Alexander Geddes (1737-1802) for his critique of the Old Testament and in particular the first chapters of Genesis.[176]

Geddes had been amongst the first in Britain to look to German biblical critics and to adopt their practices, much against the egis of his fellow priests. He applauded German ecumenism in particular, arguing that 'sacred criticism is everywhere the predominant study of the learned of all communions.'[177] The *Repository* pointed out that the Catholic Church in England and indeed in Scotland had produced little if anything of true merit, and the reasons for this, it argued, were entirely political:

> The exasperation produced by the political measures of the ruling party in England towards the Catholics, has turned the talents of both parties into the channel of polemics, and those too of the most miserable and personal kind.[178]

Rather than panegyrising the English universities as protectors of theological truth and English identity, the author recommended that they looked to the truly ecumenical and tolerant universities of Germany.

In a letter to the American Unitarian William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) in 1827, Lucy Aikin explained that for English Unitarians, Germany was of 'more importance' than France

[176] 'Mythical Interpretation of the Bible', *Monthly Repository* (September 1827), p.635.
[177] Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, p.244.
[178] 'Mythical Interpretation of the Bible', pp.633-634.

and it was in biblical criticism that Germany was producing 'the strongest effects'.[179] As part of a new interdisciplinary programme of study in German universities such as Göttingen and Berlin, biblical criticism was set alongside that of all other fields of scientific inquiry. The new and advancing methods of philology, history and critical philosophy had a quite profound effect upon orthodox claims for biblical authority and in particular upon the authority of the Old Testament. Criticisms pertaining to the supernatural claims of the Bible had been on the increase from the mid eighteenth century. Shorn of its 'inspired' origins, as Shaffer points out, the Bible was approached as any other literary text, entailing the freedom to:

> amend the 'Holy Spirit' by establishing an accurate text, sifting the historical sources, questioning the traditional ascriptions of authorship and date, scrutinizing the formation of the canon, and comparing the Scriptures coolly with the sacred and secular writings of other nations.[180]

And amongst those secular writings were of course the Socratic dialogues. A key point of interest to emerge from the interdisciplinary and comparative analysis of biblical and secular literature was the desire to distinguish between fact and myth. Again, it was the *Repository* in 1827 that referred its readers to developments in German biblical criticism over the previous thirty to forty years and in particular to the debate surrounding the existence of *mythi* in the Old Testament and the degree to which these were thought to represent obscure truths.

German Theology, Platonism and the Myth of Creation

First articulated in the mid eighteenth century by the German classical scholar and archaeologist Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), the *Repository* explained that the 'basis

[179] Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters*, p.342.
[180] Shaffer, *'Kubla Khan'*, p.62.

of heathen mythology was physical truths clothed in symbolical and poetical language'.[181] Noticing the similarities, theologians such as Eichhorn, Geddes and David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), adopted Heyne's theory on heathen (Greek) mythology and applied it to the Mosaic history, viewing the second and third chapters of Genesis – the creation of Adam and Eve and the fall – as 'the mythical embodying of a philosophical thought'.[182] Geddes, in particular, employed a markedly heterodox line.[183] Writing about the creation of Eve, Geddes scoffed at the reader who might believe a 'pretty poetical tale.' Over time, he argued, allegorical *mythi* had been allowed to assume supernatural status and yet though clearly written by human hand, the Bible and its prescriptive laws had been placed beyond human criticism. Critical and scientific reanalysis was able to reveal this intentional obscuration. Sympathising with his reader, Geddes admitted how easy it was for the 'religious but intelligent reader' to be fooled or forced into believing a 'poetical' story precisely because it was in the Bible. In any other book, he argued, the intelligent reader would not hesitate to ascribe the story to the medium of poetry. Indeed, as a work still of the highest human creativity, the Mosaic story of the creation could, Geddes argued, be ranked alongside 'the metamorphoses of Ovid'.[184] Like Ovid's tale of hermaphroditic fusion, the tale of Eve's creation out of Adam was just that, a poetic tale. Biblical *mythi* were not, however, to be mistaken for fables. As the reviewer of Jahn's *Biblical Archaeology* explained, fable in English implied 'either a fiction, designed to be imposed as truth…or, as in the familiar case of Aesop's Fables, something so obviously fictitious, that it could never be taken in a literal sense.' It was impossible to misunderstand the purely pedagogic nature of fables. If clothed in

[181] 'Mythical Interpretation of the Bible', pp.635-636.
[182] See George Eliot's 1846 translation of David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus: Critically Examined* (London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), p.21. Strauss explained Eichhorn's methods.
[183] Simon Mills, 'Scripture and Heresy in the Biblical Studies of Nathaniel Lardner, Joseph Priestley, and Thomas Belsham', in Scott Mandelbrote and Michael Ledger-Lomas (eds.), *Dissent and the Bible in Britain, c. 1650-1950* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p.105.
[184] Alexander Geddes, *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures: corresponding with a new translation of the Bible* (Published by J. Johnson, London, 1800), p.32

fiction, the kernel of the *mythi* was said to represent some philosophical or indeed material/scientific truth. Yet, despite being 'designed to convey some abstract truth in a more impressive because more sensible form…[Mythus had]…subsequently been received in a literal sense'.[185] For some, the literalising of biblical *mythi* and the manipulation of such was not accidental but intentional; designed to obscure the egalitarian, non-patriarchal origins of human society. It is possible that Wollstonecraft was aware of the debate on *mythi* when she referred with some sarcasm in *Rights of Woman* to the 'literal' interpretation employed by supporters of patriarchy who spoke of restoring 'the rib' and making 'one moral being of a man and woman; not forgetting to give her all the "submissive charms'.[186] The opinion that woman was created for man was, she reasoned, most probably taken 'from Moses's poetical story'. The only deduction that could be made from the myth of creation was that 'from the remotest antiquity', men had exerted their strength to 'subjugate' their companion.[187]

Critical reanalysis of Genesis and the Old Testament not only highlighted the shared mythical heritage of 'heathen' and Christian societies; it shed light on the particularly androcentric nature of the Christian interpretation of sexual division and in so doing drew attention to the ways in which the supposedly Divinely-sanctioned Bible was used to enforce subordination to a set of man-made rules and regulations. Geddes' work, alongside that of German scholars and theologians, encouraged people to think again about the nature of biblical truth and its striking similarities with pagan mythology. The clever comparison between biblical 'truth' and mythological 'tale' was designed to undermine the purity and truth of the man-made super-structure which supported the concept of a Divinely-ordained patriarchal state and through this the credibility of masculine superiority.

[185] 'Mythical Interpretation of the Bible', pp.635-636.
[186] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.65.
[187] Ibid., p.92.

This controversial debate can be found not only in the ideas expressed by Darwin and Coleridge but in those of the younger generation of heterodox radicals associated with Fox. One of the most notable was John Goodwyn Barmby (1820-1881). The son of a solicitor from Suffolk, and well-known within socialist communities, including the Owenites, Barmby claimed to have founded the East Suffolk and Yarmouth Chartist council in 1839 and to have founded the Communist Propaganda Society in 1841. Alongside his wife, the utopian socialist and writer on women's emancipation, Catherine Barmby (c.1816-1853), Goodwyn Barmby was a supporter of women's rights and universal (man/woman) suffrage, he was also, importantly, a friend and associate of Fox and would later become a Unitarian minister, without, according to Watts, losing his egalitarian ideas.[188] The influence of the German-led debate on *mythi* and the influence of a German-led resurgent Platonism are more than apparent in Barmby's article entitled 'The Man-Power, the Woman-Power, and the Woman-Man-Power', published in the Owenite journal the *New Moral World* in 1841. In it, Barmby wrote of the importance of human equilibrium, pointing to 'mythic' histories for evidence of human androgyneity. Writing of the androgynous 'Woman-Man-Power', Barmby argued:

> In the primitive paradisaical state of the world, if we believe some mythic histories respecting it, - and we feel very much inclined to have faith in their secret value,- the man-power and the woman-power were in a state of equilibrium, or as the Hebraic myth expresses it, Adam and Eve were not divided, being hermaphraditically one. But when Adam formed, as they tell us, a separate body for Eve from his rib, we can only interpret it as the disunion of the man-power and the woman-power, imaged by the separation of the man and woman bodies. This disunion was followed by the ascendancy of the man-power, the woman-power having gone astray, and the garden or παραδεισος of Eden was

[188] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.172; Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians*, p.204.

> lost, and is through labour to be regained. This interpretation of the fable is not orthodox, but it is not the less true.'[189]

As with Geddes and Wollstonecraft before him, Barmby referred with some contempt to the 'orthodox' interpretation of Eve's creation. He referred also to other 'mythic histories' and must surely have had in mind Aristophanes' famous tale of the androgynes in Plato's *Symposium*. Barmby's choice of 'Woman-Man', although a reversal of the original term, highlighting the linguistic problems of gender-neutral terms, is nonetheless sympathetic to the more generic and universal Greek derivation of androgyne, than to the hermaphrodite whose name was culturally-specific, derogatory and androcentric. At first glance, Barmby would appear to have used myth and fable interchangeably. On closer inspection, however, Barmby makes a subtle distinction, perhaps pointing to knowledge of Anglo-German scholarship. While ascribing the creation and fall of man and woman to fable, Barmby described their cosmological union as myth. In other words, the myth of the cosmological androgyne hid a fundamental truth. Whether biblical or pagan, *mythi* represented truths clothed in symbolism that still resonated in the present and in the radical concept of psychological androgyny in particular. *Mythi* allowed the legitimacy of the 'inspired' Bible to be questioned and undermined, while at the same time, permitting the cosmological notion of sexual equality in some quarters to be raised aloft. And for all the attempts of English and German conservatives to ignore the unsettling ambiguities revealed through the studies of anatomists and anthropologists such as Blumenbach, scientific evidence seemed to lend support to the ancient and 'philosophical thought' of androgyny.

Just as Eichhorn's critique of Genesis had placed a serious question mark over the truth and hierarchical nature of human creation, Blumenbach's research into human anatomy implied a fundamental ambivalence at the heart of human sexuality and psychology. Biological

[189] John Goodwyn Barmby, 'The Man-Power, the Woman-Power, and the Woman-Man-Power', *The New Moral World: Or, Gazette of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists* (Leeds, 1841), p.268.

determinists such as the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and the German anatomist, Samuel Thomas von Soemmerring (1755-1830), argued that evidence of sexual character could be found in the bones. The shape and size of the human skull was a particular focal point.[190] In contrast, Blumenbach's research revealed huge variation across the human species, leading him to refute any claims for concrete evidence of distinct sexual or indeed racial characteristics. Blumenbach believed that if male and female bones were mixed together it would be impossible to provide unequivocal evidence for one sex or the other. According to Londa Schiebinger, Blumenbach was generally dismissive of the debate, 'form equals function', arguing that 'reports of sexual differences in the skull and other parts of the skeleton (except for the pelvis) [were] exaggerated.' Blumenbach simply did not 'attach the significance to [sexual difference as a category] that others did at the time.' His aim was instead to show 'unity within human diversity'.[191] Demonstrating sympathy with Blumenbach, in the preface to a book on sexual difference published in 1788, the German anatomist and physiologist Joseph Wenzel (1768-1808) argued that 'one can find male bodies with a feminine build, just as one can find female bodies with a masculine build.'[192] Commenting in 1802 on Blumenbach's study of racial variation, a correspondent of the *Monthly Magazine* agreed that, when placed together the differences between a 'Senegal Negro and a European Adonis' might seem notable, until one noticed that 'there is not one of the bodily differences of these two beings, whether hair, colour, features, etc., which does not gradually run into the same thing of the other, by such a variety of shades, that no physiologist or naturalist is able to establish a certain boundary between these gradations, and

[190] Schiebinger, *The Mind has no Sex?*, pp.220-224.
[191] Ibid., pp.389-399.
[192] Ibid., p.202.

consequently between the extremes themselves.'[193] The same logic was applied to the study of men and women.[194]

Advances in German physiognomy, anatomy and anthropology clearly demonstrated to those who cared to look that human sexuality was not fixed but was as Fox argued, 'infinitely varied'.[195] It was perhaps in defence of such evidence that Robinson wrote that, 'the best provision of nature or providence (whichever name we give to the originating cause), for the fit cultivation of the spheres of nature, physical and moral, lies in the infinite varieties of human character.'[196] Even Coleridge's ambivalence on the subject of sexual difference can be viewed as arising out of this important debate.[197] Such ambivalence of course posed a threat to the hegemonic traditions of patriarchy. The *Monthly Review* adverted to the attempts by numerous anatomists, such as Soemmerring, to clear up this ambivalence by demonstrating clear differences between the anatomies of 'typical' men and women.[198]

Coleridge and German Influence

It is impossible to discuss German influence at this time without considering Coleridge in more depth. Because of his letters, diaries and memoirs, Coleridge offers important insights not only into the attractions that the new German school and its interdisciplinary system of learning held for heterodox radicals but into the growing suspicion that this small though significant band of Germanophiles encouraged amongst their English critics.

Through his friendship with Beddoes and his associations with Nitsch and English Kantians, such as the political reformer and lecturer John Thelwall (1764-1834), in the 1790s,

[193] 'To the Editor of the Monthly Magazine', *Monthly Magazine* (December 1802), p.380.
[194] Londa Schiebinger, 'The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990), p.388.
[195] Fox, 'On National Education, Lecture I', pp.15-16.
[196] Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence*, pp.134-135.
[197] See Coleridge's letter to Robinson in which he asked, 'is there not a sex in souls?' Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'To Henry Crabb Robinson, 12 March 1811', *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, vol. 3 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966), p.305.
[198] See 'Treatise on the Influence of Climate on the Human Species', *Monthly Review* (September 1813), pp.89-92.

Coleridge was introduced to German ideas some time before he travelled to the country.[199] It was, however, a generous annuity presented in 1798 to Coleridge by Josiah Wedgwood, the son of the eponymous master potter, which persuaded the poet travel to Germany where he enrolled as a student at Göttingen University between 1798 and 1799. The Wedgwoods were, of course, part of the radical scientific and nonconformist community in the midlands associated with the Lunar Society.[200] While at Göttingen, Coleridge wrote to Wedgwood listing his studies. As highlighted by several scholars, Coleridge's letter to Wedgwood is intriguing, not so much for what it includes as for what it omits. Coleridge referred openly to his studies in physiology, anatomy and natural history. Yet, he neglected to mention his studies of Kant and his attendance at Eichhorn's lectures on Higher Biblical Criticism and Heyne's seminar in philology.[201] Considering the climate of suspicion in England towards Kant and German theology, such omissions might be understandable.[202] As Class notes, Coleridge's omission of Kant is excusable owing to the increasing suspicion whipped up over heretical Kantians by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*.[203] We might assume it was not because the Wedgwoods were opposed to Kant owing in part to their associations with English Kantians such as Beddoes. Coleridge's reference to Lessing (1729-1781) and his indirect reference to the pantheism controversy of the 1780s in which Kant was deeply involved, might also indicate that he considered Wedgwood to be a sympathetic and knowledgeable ear.[204] It is, however, interesting that Coleridge should choose also to omit the name of Blumenbach, whose famous lectures and seminars on anatomy and physiology Coleridge eagerly

[199] For more detail on this and his relationships with the Wedgewoods and members of the Birmingham Lunar society, such as Darwin see Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*; See John Beer, 'Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 15/08/2018.
[200] See Trevor H. Levere, 'Wedgwood, Thomas (1771–1805)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 30/09/2016.
[201] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.128; Schaffer, *'Kubla Kahn'*, p.560
[202] Coleridge's listing of the famous lecturers at Göttingen in a letter to his wife might seem to contradict this but it can be argued that a list offers little indication of allegiance. See Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), p.221.
[203] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, pp.123-127.
[204] Ibid., pp.128-129.

attended.[205] Doubtless an assumption of knowledge was felt here too. Of course, these omissions may have been perfectly innocent, given Wedgwood's scientific background.[206] Yet, when placed together, the omissions would appear significant. his chosen subjects of study – critical philosophy, higher Biblical criticism, philology, physiology, anatomy and natural history - were at the forefront of German intellectual inquiry. Yet, with the exception of critical philosophy perhaps, viewed on their own the above subjects might appear less than radical. Their radicalness, however, lies in their combination and a combination that pointed to a highly progressive and heterodox analysis of human nature and one that can be seen informing the heterodox interpretation of psychological androgyny.

It is interesting that Coleridge's decision to study at Göttingen rather than at Jena – the home of the radical German playwright Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) and of course the German Romantics - should be interpreted by some literar scholars, as one determined more by his purse than by his politics or his religion. For Marilyn Butler, Coleridge's decision to choose Göttingen is attributed to financial expediency. Butler's almost parenthetical reference to Coleridge's interest in Göttingen's 'bible scholars' not only reveals her own literary bias but aligns her with Ashton's interpretation of Coleridge as one who had by March 1798 rejected his radical beliefs, and 'settled down to marriage, parenthood, and more orthodox political views'.[207] Taking him at his word, Ashton cites Coleridge's comment that he had, 'snapped [his] squeaking baby-trumpet of Sedition & the fragments lie scattered in the lumber-room of Penitence.'[208] Ashton does not refer to Coleridge's study of Eichhorn or Heyne and only refers to his study of Kant once he returned home to England.[209] For Butler, Ashton and

[205] See Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), p.220; Levere, *Coleridge and the Sciences*, p.297.
[206] See Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, 'The Affective Revolution in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (Summer, 2001), p.507.
[207] Maryilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.74-75; Ashton, *German Idea*, p.30
[208] Ashton, *German Idea*, p.30.
[209] Ibid., p.29; Challenging this argument, see Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.131.

Shaffer, Göttingen was a largely conservative university, in which, as Class points out, 'the intellectual milieu…was relatively unresponsive to critical philosophy'.[210] Thus for Shaffer, 'the Jena of Schiller' was discarded by Coleridge, 'for the Göttingen of Blumenbach and Eichhorn'.[211] Coleridge's decision to study theology, philosophy and anatomy under Eichhorn and Blumenbach, as opposed to the radical literature of Schiller, is evidence for these scholars of the poet's 'more orthodox political views' and his increasing rejection of radical and revolutionary Enlightenment principles. Yet, mixing as Coleridge did with men of science within the radical heterodox community in England it is hardly surprising that he should have chosen Göttingen rather than Jena.[212] Indeed, reflections on Coleridge's time at Göttingen by other English students studying with him at the time, would suggest that, unlike Crabb who was almost the only English student studying at Jena, Göttingen was the university of choice for English students wishing to study science and theology.[213] In spite of his rejection by this time of the levelling and socialist principles of democracy, Coleridge's programme of study indicates a less than conservative train of mind, and a train of mind that had by 1799 begun to reject the increasingly rigid and conservative principles of Unitarianism.[214] Nor as Class explains was Göttingen as conservative as it might at first have appeared or as unresponsive to Kant's philosophy as some have indicated. If Coleridge did not start really to study Kant until his return to England,[215] as Class points out, his first real introduction to the philosopher came while at Göttingen and it would appear that neither the university nor the city were lacking Kantian sources or enthusiasts. While professor at the university Johann Gottlieb Buhle (1763-1821) published an introduction to logic and to

[210] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.129.
[211] Shaffer, *'Kubla Kahn'*, p.29
[212] See Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*.
[213] See F. W. Stokoe, *German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788-1818* (Cambridge, At the University Press, 1926), p.119. An English student, Carlyon, recollected how Coleridge was an adherent of Kant's doctrines. If not yet a serious student of Kant at Göttingen, evidence suggests that Coleridge was familiar with him.
[214] See Ashton, *German Idea*, p.32; Beer, 'Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834)'.
[215] See Elinor Shaffer, 'Coleridge's Dialogues with German Thought', in F. Burwick (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p.558.

Critique of Pure Reason in 1795.[216] According to F.W. Stokoe, lectures on Kant were held at Göttingen while Coleridge was there and the lectures of Friedrich Bouterwek (1766-1828), a philosopher and lecturer in history at Göttingen at the time, were 'strongly Kantian in inspiration'.[217] It would seem that for Coleridge Göttingen had much to offer. He was fascinated by the advancing German-led disciplines of philosophy, science and theology and appreciated keenly how these subjects intermeshed, and Göttingen offered the perfect opportunity to study these in combination. 'How excellently,' wrote Coleridge in his notebook some years later, 'the German *Einbildungskraft* [imagination] expresses this prime and loftiest Faculty, the power of co-adunation, the faculty that forms the many into one, *in eins Bildung*.'[218]

Coleridge's decision to study at Göttingen was, it would seem, driven not by the purse or by growing conservatism but, as Class suggests, by well-developed political and quite radical interests.[219] By the time Coleridge travelled to Göttingen in 1798, the reputation of 'Germany' in England was already in decline. Prussia's unpopular military neutrality between 1795 and 1806 did little to reverse this declining reputation. Class points to John Gifford's inflammatory preface in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in which he accused the German literati and students such as Coleridge, of blurring deliberately the lines between 'true science' and theology.[220] What Gifford meant by 'true science' he did not explain, but his readers could be in little doubt that amongst such people proper empirical science had been subverted by the new German 'philosophism', a 'false species of metaphysics'. This false melding of once separate theological and scientific disciplines was detrimental to theological and scientific orthodoxies and most especially to the understanding of human nature and its

[216] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.130.
[217] Stokoe, *German Influence in the English Romantic Period*, pp.118-119.
[218] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, vol. 3, 4176.
[219] Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.126.
[220] John Gifford, 'Preface', *Anti-Jacobin Review* (September 1799), p.xiii; See Class, *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas*, p.127.

development. It was clear to Gifford that this chimerical 'philosophism' was, moreover, being disseminated across England by sympathetic Germanaphiles. Described as republicans and levellers, Gifford argued that such people were guided by 'the principles of Eichhorn' and buoyed up by Germany's independent 'republic[s] of learning.'[221] Gifford pointed to the easy spread of Kant's critical philosophy (philosophism) through German universities, illustrating how unregulated intellectual collaboration between non-sectarian academic institutions might facilitate heterodox ideas. Such accusations, no matter how exaggerated, would suggest that there was more to Coleridge's study plan than simple inquisitiveness. Coleridge's decision to study at Göttingen demonstrates, arguably, not only his political and moral sympathies but his sympathies too with notions of the existence of psycho-sexual ambiguity and his agnosticism towards organised, sectarian religion and his later support of a broad and ecumenical church.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused upon the attractions of new methods of analysis and criticism developed by German intellectuals in German universities and of the under-explored links between these and heterodox radicals in England. By examining one of the most influential and cosmopolitan radical 'sub-elites' in England, the analysis in this chapter helps, if not to undermine, then at least to complicate, the image of national insularity presented by historians such as Himmelfarb. This chapter has examined the differing attitudes to education and knowledge within German and English institutions of higher education and has considered the reasons why heterodox radicals looked to Germany rather than England for intellectual inspiration. It helps to explain in part just why Germanophiles such as Coleridge were vilified in the national press and why German universities as institutions of free speech and thought became symbols of republicanism, atheism and immorality and were as such

[221] Gifford, 'Preface', p.xiii; Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, p.245; Shaffer, 'Romantic Philosophy', p.48.

perceived by some as greater threats to England's moral and social wellbeing than France. Far from being 'inappropriate'[222] then, the study of 'influence' can help to reveal the nuances in, and the divisions behind, supposedly homogenous national identities.

In the next chapter we will look at elementary and secondary educational practices in England and the series of significant reforms introduced by heterodox radicals. The influence of the German pedagogic system will be noted as too the influence of the Platonic and gender-neutral concept of psychological androgyny as a key, and hitherto largely overlooked, source of inspiration.

[222] See p.92.

Chapter Three

Androgyny, Mediation and the Public/Private Debate on Education

Writing in the preface to her *Female Biography; or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women* (1803), the radical Unitarian writer and supporter of women's rights Mary Hays (1759-1843) asserted that she wished her 'memorial' of women whose 'endowments, or whose conduct, have reflected lustre upon the sex', to excite emulation amongst other women. 'A woman who, to the graces and gentleness of her own sex,' Hays wrote, 'adds the knowledge and fortitude of the other, exhibits the most perfect combination of human excellence'.[1] Hays was a member of the radical Johnson circle and a close friend of Wollstonecraft and initially of Godwin. Her depiction of androgynous wholeness reflects a shared belief within this heterodox group not only in the power of education to advance social reform but in the belief that the human mind, regardless of its sex, was capable of perfectibility. For those such as Hays, the only effective remedy to the vices and inequities of society was to be found in a reinvigorated educational system, and one that did not as the radical historian and political polemicist Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791) asserted in *Letters on Education* (1790), confer 'absurd notions of sexual excellence'.[2]

Rational Dissent and the Psychology of Mind

The theories of mind and psychology developed by the philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Locke; by Hartley, and indeed by the Genevan philosopher, Jean Jacque Rousseau (1712-1778), were important in helping to frame the broad debate on education across the ideological spectrum during this period. Their theories on mind, education and, in the case of Rousseau, sexual difference, acted as intellectual springboards for a diverse range of

[1] Mary Hays, *Female Biography; or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women, of all Ages and Countries* (London, Johnson, 1803), pp.iii-vi. Hays' sentiments would appear strikingly similar to those professed by Schlegel.

[2] Catherine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (London, 1790), p.130. Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p.117. In *Emma Courtney*, a semi-autobiographical novel, Hays asserted that education gave girls a 'sexual character'.

educationalists – from conservatives to radicals. For Rational Dissenters in particular, however, the material philosophies of Locke and Hobbes demonstrated that humans were rational beings, capable of perfectibility. While Hobbes argued that all knowledge came from sensations caused by the action of external objects on the senses,[3] in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke advanced the theory of Associationism by arguing that the human mind started as a *tabula rasa* or 'blank slate' and that innate or predetermined ideas did not exist. Such theories gave succour to the notion that all human beings, regardless of sex, were capable of intellectual and moral improvement. For Rational Dissenters such a Priestley, who wrote extensively on education,[4] it was the new theory of psychology introduced by David Hartley in *Observations on Man* (1749) and based on material philosophy but influenced by advances in anatomy and medicine that was to be one of the most important influences upon educational reform in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Brian Simon observes, the influence of Hartley on educational change cannot be exaggerated.[5] For Priestley, Hartley had 'thrown more useful light upon the theory of the mind than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world.'[6] Hartley's theories were most obvious in Priestley's *The Proper Objects of Education in the Present State of the World* (1791). Of interest to those who supported the concept of the unsexed mind was Hartley's assertion that:

> If Beings of the same Nature, but whose Affections and Passions are, at present, in different Proportions to each other, be exposed for an indefinite Time to the same Impressions and Associations, all their particular Differences will, at last, be over-ruled, and they will become perfectly similar, or even equal.[7]

[3] Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), p.46.
[4] Ibid., p.35, fts.1,3,5,6,7.
[5] Simon, *Studies in the History of Education*, pp.44-46.
[6] Watts, 'The Unitarian Contribution to Education', p.46.
[7] Hartley, *Observations of Man*, p.82.

Yet, for all this and despite their progressive ideas on female education, Rational Dissenters such as Priestley were concerned largely with the education of 'men' and would continue to follow the line that, aside from the soul, nature necessitated a sexual difference between men and women and that that difference required distinct spheres of learning and knowledge.

Where the last chapter considered higher educational institutions and academies, this chapter builds upon a number of excellent and relatively recent studies on elementary schooling that has emerged as a result of the cultural turn in the history of education.[8] As Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin point out, the new cultural emphasis in the study of education in history has shifted the focus of previous studies upon schools and schooling and their dependence upon statistics, government documents and biographies of individuals, towards the study of ideas in education and the relationship of these to political, social and religious ideologies. Until recently, the crucial role of education in the pursuit of reform by radicals in England during the Romantic era assumed a relatively subordinate position in the historiography. The result was a body of historical research in which the increasingly contentious topic of educational reform appeared of relative inconsequence when compared to subjects of revolution, war, emancipation, suffrage, and class division. As one of the few historians to consider the role of radicalism in education prior to the turn of the twenty-first century, Simon observed in 1972 that while 'perfectly legitimate' to recount the content and methods of education; the foundation of new institutions and the acts of Parliament and administrative structures, such histories ran the danger 'of leaving out of account deep-seated social movements that have

[8] See Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice 1780-1832* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004); Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000); Mary Hilton and Jill Shafrin (eds.), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009); Michèle Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Richard Aldrich (ed.), *Public or Private Education? Lessons from History* (London, Woburn Press, 2004); Kirstin Collins Hanley, *Mary Wollstonecraft, Pedagogy, and the Practice of Feminism* (London, Routledge, 2013); William McCarthy, 'How Dissent made Anna Letitia Barbauld, and what she made of Dissent', in Felicity James and Ian Inkster (eds.), *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.52-69; Ruth Watts, 'Some radical educational networks of the late eighteenth century and their influence', *History of Education* 27, no. 1 (1998).

profoundly influenced educational change.'[9] Prior to Simon, and conscious of the gaps, Kenneth Charlton observed that the historian of education 'must concern himself not merely with what went on in the classrooms of the past but with the transmission and modification of culture.' Moreover, the historian must consider 'the ideas which those institutions sought to put into effect, with the ways in which these ideas were set in motion, and most important of all, with the context in which and for which these ideas were developed.'[10] The recent cultural shift highlighted by Hilton and Shafrin has done much to alleviate these concerns. The appreciation of an expanding print culture and particularly the development of children's pedagogic texts for domestic and school use during the Romantic era have broadened our understanding of the rich and varied channels through which education and ideas were not only transmitted but received and imbibed.

While growing interest in the moral and intellectual improvement of the lower orders and plans for state-run national schools started to emerge in all seriousness during this period, this chapter is concerned largely with the middle to upper orders. Even if a 'middling-class' concept, for most heterodox radical educationalists, social reform was best served by focusing on those sections of society most likely to have the greatest influence and impact initially – Coleridge's 'Cosmopolite' class. Thus, building upon recent research, this chapter examines the degree to which the concept of the unsexed mind acted as a mediating principle between increasingly conservative and binary notions of private/feminine and public/masculine spheres, employing noticeably more gender-neutral curriculums, textbooks and coeducational classrooms.

[9] Brian Simon, *The Radical Tradition in Education in Britain* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1972), p.9.
[10] Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p.ix.

Androgyny, Mediation and the Public/Private Debate

Recent scholarship has begun to reveal the importance of the private/public debate regarding schooling and how this reflected the gendered concerns of the period and the ideas of sexual conduct, identity and difference. In 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education in the Long Eighteenth Century', Michèle Cohen highlights the centrality of gender to educational thought and prescription, arguing that the 'private/public' debate 'contributed to the articulation of gender difference and the conceptualisation of gendered modes of knowing'.[11] While this is of course true, focusing upon the 'articulation of gender difference' necessarily obscures the efforts to discourage or minimise these developments. Exploring the presence of the concept of androgyny in this debate not only makes for a more nuanced account but might help to explain the gendered direction of movement and the points of contention and deviation. In complicating this often binary picture, the concept of the unsexed mind offers insights into what Sophia Woodley describes as 'a battleground between two distinct kinds of education, public and private, which', she argues, 'revealed radically different assumptions about human nature and the nature of society'.[12] If there was a battle between public and private educations then the interventions of heterodox radicals sought in many ways to bring these two opposing spheres together.

As Cohen points out, distinctions between private and public education in the long eighteenth century were far from clear cut. For some, private referred to domestic education and public to the education supplied at grammar or 'great' boarding schools such as Eton, Harrow and Winchester. Yet private could also refer to 'a variety of small seminaries', which could also be called 'public' to distinguish them from domestic instruction.[13] As Woodley notes, the distinctions between the two were 'notably hazy', with 'very small family-run girls' schools

[11] Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education', p.15.
[12] Sophia Woodley, '"Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure": The Debate between Private and Public Education in Britain, 1760-1800', in Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds.), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), p.21.
[13] Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education', p.15

and small tutorial establishments for boys [coming] close to bridging the gap entirely'.[14] We certainly should not mistake the debate on private and public education in the eighteenth century, as Woodley points out, to have been a discussion on the merits of the private versus the state system, because, of course, state schools did not exist. And while what existed of schooling for the lower orders, and many from within the middle-classes as well, was conducted at a variety of small-scale and often short-lived establishments from day schools for labourers' children to Dame and Sunday schools, the vast majority of the children of the middle and upper classes, if not educated in the home, were sent away to grammar or boarding schools. As part of the broader critique of the corruption and growing effeminacy of the aristocracy and the ruling orders, boarding schools for boys and girls became the focus of increasingly heated debate and investigation. Boarding schools were described as hotbeds of vice and breeding grounds of 'tyranny and abject slavery'.[15]

Although not the main focus of this chapter, the development of a system of working-class and national education would emerge to a large degree out of the private/public debate. Fears for the control and moral-wellbeing of working-class children without adequate parental supervision and instruction led to the development of infant schooling in the early 1820s,[16] influenced by innovations in Scotland and increasingly by figures such as the socialist and philanthropist Robert Owen (1771-1858), the radical and chronicler Francis Place (1771-1854) and the lord chancellor Henry Brougham (1778-1868), whose Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders was established in 1816.[17] Owen's coeducational infant school in New Lanark, established also in 1816, is thought to have been the first of its kind. The school was called the *Institute for the Formation of Character* and focused, among other

[14] Woodley, '"Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure"', p.22.
[15] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.243.
[16] See Karen Clarke, 'Public and Private Children: Infant Education in the 1820s and 1830s', in Carolyn Steedman, Cathy Urwin and Valerie Walkerdine (eds.), *Language, Gender and Childhood* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p.75.
[17] Though a little old, Simon (ed.), *Radical Tradition in Education*, offers a good overview of radical interventions during this period.

subjects, upon dancing and singing, with the onus placed on refining and invigorating.[18] Owen's thoughts on the essential androgyny of sexual character would appear much in keeping with ideas developed within the heterodox radical community with which he had strong ties. As a young man, Owen attended lectures at Manchester College and through his membership of the Literary and Philosophical Society of the same town, would come into contact with figures and ideas prominent within Rational Dissent at the time. Within this circle was Godwin, whose *Political Justice* would exert a profound influence upon Owen's young mind.[19] In addition to the influences of Materialism, Necessitarianism, Utilitarianism and Associationism, ideas of a noticeably more Platonic hue are discernible, as is what Taylor refers to as the 'persistent echo of Shelley'.[20] In words that might appear to indicated familiarity with the principles of androgyneity in the *Symposium*, Owen argued in 1836 that it did not appear 'becoming to make any distinction in the sexes during childhood and youth…It may readily be proved that one sex cannot be instructed at any age independently of the other – male and female are essential in the human character – and without the relative admixture of their sensations, or the due comparison of their impressions, only a partial approach to wisdom can be attained'.[21] Owen's comments may well be a reflection of the influence of the Swiss-German educationalists Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg (1771-1844) and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827). In 1818, Owen had sent both his sons to Fellenberg's school in Hofwyl. Indeed, the school established by Owen in the new American community of Harmony in the early 1840s employed as the headmaster the German Albert Oestreicher, indicating as Royle suggests, Owen's admiration of the Swiss-German educational

[18] Gregory Claeys, 'Robert Owen (1771-1858)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* accessed online: 13/06/2014.
[19] See Edward Royle, *Robert Owen and the Commencement of the Millennium: A Study of the Harmony Community* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998), pp.8-9.
[20] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.43-44.
[21] Ibid., p.51.

reformers.[22] Owen's school at Harmony was based, it would seem, on the model first established at New Lanark. Boys and girls were taught together from the ages of six through to sixteen and were taught a broad range of subjects including geography, astronomy, ancient and modern history, chemistry, anatomy, geometry, physiology, drawing, painting in oil, vocal and instrumental music, geometry, French and German. Yet, as Royle points out, once the school was repackaged as an industrial school, the hours devoted after mental labour to developing trades for boys and domestic duties for girls helped to reinforce the separate spheres of men and women within Owen's 'new moral world',[23] a trend noticeable in other initially egalitarian movements such as the Saint-Simonians as will be discussed in the final chapter.

Yet, as Matthew O. Grenby rightly attests, 'if, as a whole, domestic and school pedagogies were increasingly differentiated by gender, the debate, in its detail, resists attempts to impose on it a single, simple trajectory'.[24] Indeed, the array of discourses produced by heterodox radicals might be interpreted as evidence of a desire to 'resist' differentiation by gender. Grenby challenges the extent to which public opinion on education had shifted in favour of the public/masculine and private/feminine dichotomy by the end of the eighteenth century as presented by Cohen.[25] Certainly, within the heterodox community the merits and deficits of public and private schooling were rigorously assessed and weighed with both systems finding favour for varying reasons. The Unitarian minister and schoolmaster, Lant Carpenter (1780-1840) was 'more and more confirmed in the opinion, that', of domestic and public education, 'no general conclusion can be drawn of universal application; that each system has its

[22] Royle, *Robert Owen*, pp.172-173.
[23] Ibid., p.175.
[24] M.O. Grenby, 'Children's Literature, the home, and the debate on public versus private education, c. 1760-1845', *Oxford Review of Education* 41, no. 4 (2015), p.465.
[25] Ibid., p.465.

advantages and its disadvantages'.[26] It would be wrong, also, to assume that a public education was considered more rigorous than a private and domestic education. According to Grenby, in certain households, domestic educations were just as 'rigorous, extensive or demanding' as those provided at school. This was achieved increasingly through the aid of comprehensive texts books designed specifically with the domestic class room in mind, explored in more depth below. The numbers of pedagogic texts expanded 'exponentially from the 1780s'.[27] Yet, we must be wary of imposing too rigid a distinction between domestic/home and public/school environments. As Grenby explains, the proliferation of small schools that emerged in the late eighteenth century, especially for girls, were often run by a single 'master' or 'governess' and advertised as 'offering a familial, affectionate and *domestic* environment'.[28] With the backlash against the 'public' boarding schools, the 'domestic' environment, both at home and increasingly at school, was hailed by radicals and conservatives alike as the most effective way of stemming the spread of immorality and degeneration by inculcating the virtues of domestic affection and respect. In her poem, *Epistles on Women* (1810), Aikin provided a vivid and highly emotive image of the dangers of the 'monastic' and segregated system of public education. Although Aikin was primarily concerned for the mistreatment of girls and women, she alluded to the dangers that befell the emotional wellbeing of young boys when separated from the caring environment of home. In the first epistle, Aikin described the barren and forlorn nature of a motherless Adam:

> Those sullen lips no mother's lips have prest, /Nor drawn, sweet labour! At her kindly breast; /No mother's voice has touched that slumbering ear, / Nor glistening eye beguiled him of a tear; /Love nursed not him with sweet endearing wiles, / Nor woman taught the sympathy of smiles; / Vacant and sad his rayless glances roll, / Nor hope nor joy illumes

[26] Lant Carpenter, *Principles of Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1820), p.ix.
[27] Grenby, 'Children's Literature', p.465.
[28] Ibid., p.471.

> his darkling soul; / Ah! Hapless world that such a wretch obeys! / Ah! Joyless Adam, though a world he sways![29]

It is interesting therefore, that Cohen should write that 'no educational or moral manual throughout the [long eighteenth century] even hinted that distancing boys from their families might be problematic.'[30] Of course, not all educationalists were opposed to public educations. Some such as the headmaster of Tonbridge Boys' School, Vicesimus Knox (1752-1821), Jane West and More, feared that domestic educations for boys would result in effeminacy and a lack of manly independence through the neglect of emulation.

From the mid-eighteenth-century growing numbers were voicing concern over the declining moral and spiritual state of the young and of the signs of creeping effeminacy amongst men of the upper classes in particular. One such critic was the author and moralist, John Brown (1715-1766). In his controversial work, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), Brown warned of the growing effeminacy amongst the upper classes and of the blurring of sexual distinction between men and women, arguing that:

> It may probably be asked why the ruling manners of our women have not been particularly delineated? The reason is, because they are essentially the same as those of the men, and are therefore included in this estimate. The sexes have now little other apparent distinction, beyond that of person and dress: their peculiar and characteristic manners are confounded and lost: the one sex having advanced into Boldness, as the other have sunk into Effeminacy.[31]

One of the most popular interventions on this score was *Liberal Education; or a Practical Treatise on the Method of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning,* published in 1785 by Knox. Knox's treatise appeared at a time when the reputation of public schools, as dens of iniquity

[29] Lucy Aikin, *Epistles on Women* (London, 1810), p.10.
[30] Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public debate on Education', p.24.
[31] See John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, 1757), p.27.

and indolence, had hit an all-time low.[32] Knox would, as Cohen argues, become a 'strong voice' in support of public education for boys as the means through which effeminacy and idleness would be countered. Where a public education inculcated manly virtues of emulation, discipline and hardiness; a private education for boys produced the exact opposite.[33] However, even Rational Dissenting radicals in favour of private education expressed similar concerns, with Priestley advising that for boys intended for more active service or for a military or naval career, the domestic environment would not instil the necessary steeliness or competitive edge. As Woodley points out, Priestley believed that boys benefited from, 'frequent intercourse, and mutual exertion' with their equals.[34] Thus clear distinctions between what might be described as conservative and radical educationalists are at times difficult to discern. While believing in the benefits of emulation for boys, the majority it would seem, including Priestley, were in agreement that emulation between girls was misguided and wrong. Even Wollstonecraft was critical of the bad habits that might be acquired through emulation at girls' schools.[35] Yet, while heterodox radicals such as Wollstonecraft criticised the 'hereditary effeminacy' of the emasculated aristocracy, the remedy put forward was not to segregate the sexes but to integrate them.[36] The only way to avoid the two extremes of the private and public systems, which were 'equally injurious to morality', Wollstonecraft argued, 'would be to contrive some way of combining a public and private education'.[37] For heterodox radicals a middle way between the two spheres was advocated, arguing that the mischiefs of both would be avoided and appropriate emulation between the sexes encouraged. In a move far more radical than most, Wollstonecraft even

[32] Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education', p.18.
[33] Michèle Cohen, '"To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise": Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.226-227.
[34] Joseph Priestley, *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education* (London, J. Johnson, 1778), p.78; See Woodley, '"Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure"', pp.29-30.
[35] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.249.
[36] Ibid., p.40.
[37] Ibid., pp.242-243.

advocated a new system of day schools that would allow children of both sexes from the middle and upper classes to mix freely with those of the lower, before returning to the domestic hearth in the evening.[38] Thus improvements to the moral and intellectual character of society would be encouraged through the development of more gender-neutral environments.

Years later, invoking the merits of shared and equal educations in a lecture given before his congregation at the South Place Chapel, Fox advised that 'the training that seems most congenial with each nature is that which should be diligently employed upon the other'. Where girls might be strengthened by 'that mental discipline which may seem to have most affinity with the sterner constitution', boys would in contrast grow from 'that cultivation which is generally appropriated to the gentle, in order to endow it with more kindness, and preserve it from hardness and coarseness'.[39] 'Thus,' Fox urged, would 'Education advance the time, through all appropriate legal and social changes, when mutually adapted qualities shall act and react for the highest production of mutual good'.[40] A few years prior to this, a member of the *Repository* and South Place Chapel set would contribute to the debate on coeducation and human refinement. Writing 'On the Condition of Women in England' published in the *Repository* in 1833, the radical and railway engineer, William Bridges Adams (Junius Redivivus) (1797-1872), and husband of the poet Sarah Flower Adams (1805-1848), asserted that parents should 'confine not the education of your daughters to what is merely ornamental, nor deny the graces to your sons.' [41] Speaking before Brougham's Education Committee, the Scottish advocate and educationalist James Simpson (1781-1853), the co-founder of the Edinburgh Model Infant School, would state categorically that not only were

[38] Grenby, 'Children's Literature', p.473.
[39] Fox, 'On National Education, Lecture II', pp.60-61. See also, Frederick Hill, *National Education: Its present state and prospects,* vol. 1 (London, 1836), pp.218-219.
[40] Fox, 'On National Education, Lecture II', pp.60-61.
[41] W.B. Adams, 'On the Condition of Women in England', *Monthly Repository* (July 1833), p.491; Gleadle, *Early Feminists,* p.37.

the minds of boys and girls 'alike', and therefore deserving of the same 'cultivation', [42] but that coeducation would enable them to 'stimulate each other in the best possible way to exertion…' 'The effect of proper elementary education', would, he said, 'refine both sexes to a degree we have never seen, certainly in the lower ranks, or in any rank of life.'[43] Simpson was of particular interest to Brougham's committee not only because of his knowledge and experience of the non-sectarian coeducational systems in Scotland but for his knowledge of the German and more particularly Prussian education system, demonstrating the flow of ideas and knowledge on education and more specifically coeducation between the three countries.[44]

The Gender-Neutral Textbook and the Power of Conversation

Of significant help to the mediation between or melding of the public and private spheres of education was the development of pedagogic literature and teaching manuals for schools and for domestic use. The promotion of a more gender-neutral system of instruction was helped enormously by an expanding print trade and most notably by printers and publishers sympathetic to intellectual reform, such as Johnson.

In 1791, Wollstonecraft's translation and adaptation of *Elements of Morality, for the Use of Children*, written by the German educational reformer Christian Salzmann (1744-1811), was published in three volumes by Johnson and given a warm endorsement in his *Analytical Review*. Not only was it recommended for its 'moral lessons' but for the 'amusement' it would give to children and parents alike. The tales were not fanciful but practical, abounding with 'amusing incidents' and 'connected by a continued course of narration, which is both agreeable in the perusal, and better remembered, than a miscellaneous collection of short and detached stories'.[45] Subjects included: health; filial affection; industry; economy; disobedience to parents; contempt for the poor; rudeness to servants and disrespect to

[42] 'Education Report', *Monthly Repository*, (February 1836), p.77.
[43] *Select Committee on Education in England and Wales* (London, 1835), p.130.
[44] Ibid., pp.39, 148-149.
[45] D.M. 'Book Review', *The Analytical Review: or, History of Literature* (October 1791), p.217.

foreigners.[46] Of significance for Grenby is the introductory address to parents provided by Salzmann in which advice was given on the most effective use of the book as a tool for private and domestic instruction.[47] Wollstonecraft's successful adaptation might be seen as another instance in which German educational methods found their way into English practice. *Evenings at Home* (1792-6) was another such example. Written by Aikin and Barbauld, and printed by Johnson, the book quickly became an international bestseller, reaching its fifteenth edition in 1868. Tales of 'True Heroism' and emulation intermingled with stories about education, man and 'The Female Choice'.[48] *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1805) and *The Pantheon: Or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806), written by Godwin but published under his pseudonym, Edward Baldwin, provided a popular and imaginative way of imparting moral guidance and tuition and, more importantly for Godwin, of engaging the child's imagination. The appeal of all of these books lay in their use of engaging, imaginative, discussion-based, moral tales. As Godwin wrote in the preface to the first of his books, his intentions were to form, 'the mind of the learner to habits of meditation and reflection'.[49] The use of the pseudonym allowed the works to pass into general circulation free from the taints of radicalism, with two of Godwin's 'arch-enemies' the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *British Critic* recommending both books for private and school consumption with great enthusiasm.[50] Both *Evenings at Home* and *Fables Ancient and Modern* were intended, more importantly, for what Grenby describes as 'cross-gender reading'.[51] Importantly, the educational books produced by Wollstonecraft, Aikin, Barbauld and Godwin were not divided into male and female sections. Instead, stories for boys and girls mingled freely and tales that

[46] Ibid., p.220.
[47] Grenby, 'Children's Literature', p.468.
[48] John Aikin and Anna Barbauld, *Evenings at Home: or The Juvenile Budget Opened,* (New York, Harper and Brothers,1868), p.6. The American editor described it as 'a favourite for nearly half a century.'
[49] William Godwin, *Fables Ancient and Modern, Adapted for the Use of Children, 10th ed.* (London, M.J. Godwin and Co., 1824), p.iv; *The Pantheon: Or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (London, Thomas Hodgkins, 1806).
[50] Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1984), pp.268-269.
[51] M.O. Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.53.

would ordinarily have been aimed at one sex were considered as interesting and informative to the other. Similar to Godwin's theory of learning, Aileen Fyfe notes the 'miscellaneous' or 'promiscuous' approach adopted in *Evenings at Home*, whereby stories on a whole host of topics and with a variety of characters, were arranged in seemingly random order.[52] What it demonstrates is how the miscellaneous approach not only opened up the mind to a variety of intellectual and emotional vistas, but also opened up understanding between the sexes through the sharing of experience and imagination.

As Michelle Levy observes, 'frequently in *Evenings at Home*, in both the frame narrative and the individual pieces, we are presented with a domestic space that is neither feminized nor privatized, but rather is populated by men, women, and children, from within and outside the family (in the form of visitors).' For Linda Colley and Levy, such literature at the end of the eighteenth century demonstrates not only that 'the literature of separate spheres was more didactic than descriptive'[53] but that its authors 'resisted the paradigm altogether.' As Levy argues, for Barbauld and Aikin, *Evenings at Home* 'offered an alternative model, insistently conceiving of the private family home as the site of the public sphere, and of the family itself as the institution capable of effecting profound national change.'[54] Much like Barbauld and Aikin, Maria and Richard Edgeworth, authors of the teaching manual, *Practical Education* (1798),[55] rejected dull rote learning in favour of conversation and experimentation. Learning through conversation was advocated by Godwin in *Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (1797), who insisted that 'there is a vivacity, and…a richness, in the hints struck out in conversation, that are with difficulty attained in any other method'.[56] In *Rights of*

[52] Eileen Fyfe, 'Reading Children's Books in Late Eighteenth-Century Dissenting Families', *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 2 (June 2000), pp.457-458.
[53] Colley, *Britons*, p.5.
[54] Michelle Levy, 'The Radical Education of Evenings at Home', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19, no.1-2 (2006-7), p.6.
[55] Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education* (London, J. Johnson, 1798).
[56] William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (Edinburgh and London, John Anderson and Simpkin and Marshall, 1823), p.xiii.

Woman, Wollstonecraft described this conversational method as 'socratic' [sic].[57] Discouraging customary notions of deference, the Socratic Method encouraged instead collaboration and debate, helping, arguably, to endorse what Philp describes as a 'community of discussants' keen on promoting candour and independent thought.[58] Cohen has pointed to the 'important mode of mental training' supplied by 'familial conversations' at this time, noting how the 'familial conversation' offers 'an artful pedagogic approach bringing together the informal – social, domestic – within the more formal dialogic form'. This form of educational conversation, Cohen contends, allows for 'active participation in the construction of shared understanding while at the same time being structured and methodical so as to facilitate the integration of knowledge in the mind of the learner'.[59] And as Cohen suggests, this might help to explain in part Barbauld's advice, offered by some scholars as evidence of Barbauld's anti-feminism, that 'the best way for women to acquire knowledge is from conversation with a father, a brother or friend, in the way of family intercourse and easy conversation'.[60] Distinctions between parent and child and teacher and student were blurred, as were binary distinctions between boys and girls. If heterodox radicals were concerned on the whole with reforming the private and domestic sphere it was with the seeming intention of blurring if not dissolving the boundaries between the private and the public spheres.

While Dissenting academies such as Warrington employed the method of 'familiar conversation' in their classrooms, heterodox radicals such as Godwin put this method to practice in the shared, gender-neutral, environment of the home. In Godwin's own household, his sons and daughters, when they were not at school (as they all were at various times), shared in the same intellectual conversations, exercises and demonstrations. Notable and

[57] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.253.
[58] Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism', p.37.
[59] Michèlle Cohen, '"Familiar Conversation": The Role of the 'Familiar Format' in Education in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', in Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds.), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), pp.101,108.
[60] Ibid., p.109; Barbauld, *Works*, vol. 1, p.xviii.

influential visitors to the house would engage in pedagogic activity with all the children with no sense of sexual segregation.[61] Josiah Wedgwood (Sr.) educated all his children together at home and as Chernock points out, allowed his daughters to attend the Lunar Society's meetings, thus mixing private and public spheres.[62] Much of the pedagogic literature written by radicals may have been written with the domestic environment in mind but, as Grenby argues, such literature looked to acknowledge and encourage 'public-oriented' relations.[63] Heterodox radicals were not looking to wrap children in cotton wool and protect them from the outside world but to create spaces in which they would feel free to explore, to question and to grow: spaces in which they hoped one day to live in themselves.

The Familial Bonds of Education

Radicals emphasised the importance of maintaining strong familial ties, which would in themselves help to blur the distinctions between private and public spheres and promote compassion, civic pride and responsibility. The virtues of a domestic education for boys and girls were promulgated by educationalists such as Macaulay, Wollstonecraft, Barbauld and Aikin.[64] Wollstonecraft advised that boys and girls should, 'sleep at home that they may learn to love home.'[65] 'Few, I believe,' Wollstonecraft argued, 'have had much affection for mankind, who did not first love their parents, their brothers, sisters, and even the domestic brutes, whom they first played with'.[66] 'To improve both sexes', Wollstonecraft advised, 'they ought, not only in private families, but in public schools, to be educated together'.[67] Similarly, Barbauld advised that, within the precincts of a moral and loving home, boys should be brought up under the tutelage of both parents in order to 'imbibe affection from

[61] See Grenby, *Child Reader*, p.473.
[62] Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman', p.520.
[63] Grenby, 'Children's Literature', p.474.
[64] See J.L. Chirol, *An Enquiry into the Best System of Female Education: Or Boarding School and Home Education Attentively Considered* (London, 1809), p.118; Macaulay, *Letters on Education*, p.32; Aikin, *Epistles*
[65] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p259.
[66] Ibid., p.246
[67] Ibid., p.250.

your caresses; taste from your conversation; urbanity from the commerce of your society; and mutual love from your example.[68] Likewise, in *Letters on Education* (1790), a work of significant influence upon Wollstonecraft, Macaulay admonished parents to:

> …take measures for the virtue and the harmony of your family, by uniting their young minds early in the soft bonds of friendship. Let your children be brought up together; let their sports and studies be the same; let them enjoy, in the constant presence of those who are set over them, all that freedom which innocence renders harmless, and in which Nature rejoices. By the uninterrupted intercourse which you thus establish, both sexes will find, that friendship may be enjoyed between them without passion.[69]

As noted above, distinctions between private and public schooling were easily blurred and most notably in smaller institutions run often by husbands and wives, with the latter taking on pastoral duties.[70] The blurring or melding of private and public would appear even more noticeable within those institutions or classrooms run by heterodox radicals. Principles of domesticity were not confined to the home but were applied with vigour to the school as well. Beard argued that 'school in reality holds the place of the home; home is God's school, but since present modes of life do not permit the parent to give his child a suitable training, he transfers education to the school. The school therefore should approximate as closely as possible to the home.'[71] Writing some twenty to thirty years later and looking back at the early pioneers of coeducational institutions, the Scottish educationalist, Rev. James Currie, maintained that:

[68] Barbauld, *Works*, vol. 2, p318.
[69] Macaulay, *Letters on Education*, p.32.
[70] Grenby, 'Children's Literature', p.471.
[71] John Relly Beard, *Schools* (London, 1842), p.43.

> Nature sets us the example of the mingling of the sexes for mutual influence in the family circle; and there is no reason why the good effects that flow from its constitution should not be looked for…when we imitate her example in the common school.[72]

The Gender-neutral curriculum

In schools run by radical educationalists efforts would appear to have been made to create more androgynous environments supported by noticeably more gender-neutral curriculums. One such work was *A Familiar Introduction to the Arts and Sciences, for the use of Schools and Young Persons* (1810), written by the radical Unitarian minister Jeremiah Joyce (1763-1816). Like many of his disenfranchised radical Rational Dissenting peers, Joyce used his platform as a minister and as a writer to support the French Revolution and to attack those who condemned it. In May 1794, during the treason trials, Joyce was imprisoned for high treason, along with Thomas Hardy and John Horne Tooke, both members of the London Corresponding Society. All three were subsequently released later that year. However, Joyce's notoriety affected his reputation as a minister, resulting in his failure to secure a regular position. Like many heterodox radicals, Joyce turned to writing to supplement his income.[73]

For Joyce, as for Barbauld and Aikin, education was crucial to the progress of socio-political reform and Joyce's radical opinions were very much present in his *Familiar Introduction*. Like *Evenings at Home*, the book was designed to blend domestic with public instruction, suggesting that even if the classroom was single-sexed, the readership was not. Joyce's reference both in the title and in the advertisement made clear that his work was suitable for boys and girls. Moreover, Joyce did not specify an age-limit, all of which suggested that the content of learning should suit the individual, something in direct contravention to the advice

[72] Rev. James Currie, *The Principles and Practice of Common-School Education* (London, 1861), pp.173-172.
[73] G.M. Ditchfield, 'Joyce, Jeremiah (1763-1816)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 20/08/2018.

given by the Anglican and evangelical educationalist, Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), who believed that all learning should be age-appropriate.[74] In the advertisement to Joyce's work, the following subjects were listed as, 'the most important topics with which young persons of both sexes ought to be acquainted': Grammar; Logic; Rhetoric; Geography; Artificial Memory; Mythology; History; Arithmetic; Algebra; Geometry; Trigonometry; Mensuration; Conic Sections; Architecture; Natural Philosophy; Mechanics; Hydrostatics; Hydraulics; Pneumatics; Acoustics; Optics; Astronomy; electricity; Galvanism; Magnetism; Chemistry; Mineralogy; Botany and Natural History.[75] Though presented as an introduction to the arts and the sciences, Joyce's work favoured the latter over the former. Literature is noticeably absent, though it might be assumed that mythology and history might encourage this. Philosophy is also not attended to, though Joyce advises that 'philosophical knowledge…will be found of the most extensive use to all persons who would examine with accuracy the achievements of ancient nations in peace or war, or would impartially weigh the account of any thing [sic] in which the powers of nature are employed.'[76] Although subjects such as botany and even chemistry were viewed as suitable for girls, the study of the subjects of hydraulics, pneumatics and electricity could hardly be deemed necessary for the private and domestic sphere, unless Joyce had his sights fixed upon the unknown future.

Even where works on education were written specifically with boys in mind, such as *Public Education* (1825), written by the Hills of Hazelwood School, that the subject matter was more than appropriate for female instruction was made clear. Despite admitting that they were, through 'necessity and inclination confined to the instruction and government of boys at school,' the authors added that as the principles upon which they acted were 'drawn from a consideration of human nature generally, many of them (if they are true) may undoubtedly be

[74] See Levy, 'The Radical Education of Evenings at Home', p.2, ft. 4.
[75] Jeremiah Joyce, 'Advertisement', *A Familiar Introduction to the Arts and Sciences, for the use of Schools and Young Persons* (London, 1810).
[76] Ibid., p.116.

applied without distinction of either age or sex.'[77] Again age-appropriate learning is rejected as is sex-specific learning.

While the above might be viewed as boys' educations extended to girls without any real reciprocity, there were boys' schools in which feminine principles would appear to have been consciously encouraged. Palgrave School, owned and run by Barbauld and her husband, Rochemont, between 1774 and 1785,[78] and the Bridge Street School established by John Relly Beard in the late 1830s are excellent examples of boys' schools in which the pupils were encouraged not only to explore their 'feminine' sides but were dissuaded from assuming unthinkingly gender-specific traits or interests.

Beard trained for the ministry at Manchester College, York. On completion in 1825 he moved to Greengate, Salford where he became the minister of a newly formed congregation. Yet, as Alan Ruston remarks, a declining stipend and a growing family forced Beard to look for another source of income. Between 1842 and 1849 Beard founded and ran the Bridge Street School.[79] Beard's day and boarding school, successful and innovative as Ruston notes, was a reflection of his progressive views and his belief in the reformative and transformative power of education and of the mix of private and domestic spheres. Although a school for boys, Beard's curriculum would appear to accommodate a more sensitive and feminine, and thus, more androgynous mode of expression and instruction. In his published statement of the 'objects and studies' of his school, Beard was eager to stress the critical role of imagination in the full development of young minds; an opinion quite departed from that of Priestley. Like Godwin and Barbauld, Beard believed that morality was developed through the power of

[77] M.D. and R. Hill, *Public Education: plans for the government and liberal instruction of boys, in large numbers; as practisd at Hazelwood School Hill* (London, 1825), p.xvii.
[78] A little early for this study, we might see, however, the early development of heterodox methods in Palgrave.
[79] Alun Ruston, 'Beard, John Relly, (1800-1876)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 21/08/2018.

imagination and empathy.[80] In addition to maths, science, classics, geography and history, the boys at Beard's establishment were encouraged in more feminine pursuits. They were persuaded to read the 'best' works of fiction and were taught drawing, music and dance. Although these last three subjects were included in the curriculums of more 'manly' schools, such as that by Knox, Beard's curriculum would appear to have awarded these subjects greater weight and prominence. We might contrast this with Knox's advice that only once a boy had learned to 'esteem religion, learning, truth [and] benevolence', could he then be introduced to the study of the 'ornamental' arts. Knox, however, was adamant that these subjects remained subordinate to more 'serious and useful pursuits'.[81] Indeed, lending support to the reputation for being unimaginative and coldly-analytical and perhaps demonstrating the growing distance between the older radicals of Rational Dissent and their younger and more heterodox peers, in his *Miscellaneous Observations relating to Education* (1778), Priestley warned that 'distinguished excellence in any of the arts hardly ever fails to beget the most excessive and ridiculous *vanity*…It is only an acquaintance with more liberal and manly *science*…that inspires true dignity and *generosity* of sentiments'.[82] Though wary of imbalance, for Beard, the 'ornamental' subjects were vital not only for developing 'mechanical dexterity' but as sources of 'personal and domestic' pleasure:[83] evidence perhaps of a 'middle way' between the public and private spheres, and an influence that might inculcate a more androgynous moral character.

It is worth noting perhaps that Beard was not only an untiring campaigner for radical educational reform throughout his adult life, contributing numerous articles and books to the cause but that he was awarded also an honorary degree from the German university of

[80] John Relly Beard, *Statement of the Objects and Studies Pursued in the Rev. J.R. Beard's Day and Boarding School* (Manchester, c.1840), p5.
[81] Vicesimus Knox, *Liberal Education: Or a Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning* (London, C. Dilly,1775), p.157.
[82] Priestley, *Miscellaneous Observations*, pp.58-59.
[83] Beard, *Statement*, pp.6-7.

Geissen in 1841 for services to literature. Beard translated several works on German theology and philosophy including a translation from the French of Amand Saintes' *A Critical History of Rationalism in Germany* (1849). If not in total agreement with all the opinions voiced in Saintes' history, Beard's translation of this and other German works, demonstrates in depth knowledge of developments in German theology and philosophy, including the influence of a resurgent Platonism upon these.[84]

In addition to English literature, composition, viewed often as a feminine subject, was also included in Beard's curriculum, in order to provide 'the means of gratifying, tempering, chastening, and directing the imagination.'[85] When many, even Wollstonecraft, were warning of the pernicious effects of novel-reading upon impressionable young minds, the Hills of Hazelwood boys' school extolled the virtues of novels as aids to teaching. Novels, the Hills argued, helped to stimulate 'important inquiries'; [they] enabled them to 'instil [principles] without labour, and so much more effectually than we could have done by any exertions of our own'.[86] Such notions are evidence of a disinclination amongst heterodox radicals to gender the private and public spheres, just as they strove to blur the distinctions between feminine and masculine qualities. In contrast to the martial ideals of aggressive competitiveness advocated in schools such as Harrow and Eton, feminine compassion and regard for fellow-feeling were encouraged, as was respect for female capabilities.[87] Interestingly, Jan Fergus notes the presence of literature associated with girls and women amongst the collections of books read by boys at Rugby school, suggesting that such fictional

[84] Ruston, 'Beard, John Relly, (1800-1876)'; Amand Saintes, *A Critical History of Rationalism in Germany, from its Origin to the Present Time*, trans. by John Relly Beard (London, Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1849).
[85] Beard, *Statement*, p.5.
[86] Hill, *Public Education*, pp.215-216.
[87] See William McCarthy, 'The Celebrated Academy at Palgrave: A Documentary History of Anna Letitia Barbauld's School', in Paul J. Korshin (ed.), *The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual* 8 (New York, AMS PRESS, 1997), pp.312-313.

works, ‘allowed boys to create an alternative home, a child’s space, where they could be children in a different way than a hostile, exacting school culture permitted’.[88]

At Palgrave it was not so much the curriculum as the style and method of teaching that might be described as androgynous. In a role that extended beyond the traditionally maternal and pastoral, and in a teaching capacity that, while not equal to that of her husband’s, was at least as responsible, Barbauld taught her male pupils not only English composition, geography and history, but the masculine arts of public speaking and declamation.[89] Numerous ‘prologues, epilogues, and interludes,’ penned by Barbauld were performed by the boys in plays, and recited in examinations, allowing her private ‘feminine’ thoughts to be voiced, noticeably, through the voice of the ‘public’ male.[90] McCarthy raises an intriguing point with regards to Barbauld and female citizenship. ‘Not allowed by reason of her sex to perform any official act of citizenship,’ argues McCarthy, ‘Barbauld saw teaching as a way for her to be an active citizen: through teaching, she could create the citizens of the future’.[91] When Wollstonecraft protested that women who refused to suckle and educate their own infants were undeserving of citizenship,[92] she was in many respects alluding to a similar belief that women in their capacity both as mothers and as teachers were instrumental in nurturing and nourishing the egalitarian minds of the future and of setting positive examples of womankind. Indeed, it is easy to lose sight of the value and importance, it would seem, that radical educationalists of both sexes invested in the importance of intellectual procreancy as a form of androgynous motherhood. Even within the more private environment of the classroom the visible and active presence of rational and intelligent female teachers might nurture a generation of boys who, indifferent to gendered stereotypes, would be more sensitive to socio-political and

[88] Jan Fergus, *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), p.241.
[89] Barbauld, *Works*, vol.1, pp.xxv-xxvii.
[90] Ibid., p.xxvii.
[91] McCarthy, 'How Dissent made Anna Letitia Barbauld’, p.62
[92] See ‘A Vindication of the Rights of Woman’, *Monthly Review* (June 1792), p.206

sexual prejudices and thus keen to challenge them. Indeed, the challenging of traditional sexual stereotypes would appear to have been routine at Palgrave.

One such stereotype was the figure of the professional soldier.[93] Presented by many within the conservative and evangelical establishment as the Christian and classical embodiment of national strength, maturity, virility and heroism, for heterodox radicals such as Barbauld, the professional soldier epitomised the exact opposite. Time and again in her educational works and poems the brutality and excesses of the professional soldier were highlighted. Often read out by her male pupils at school recitals, Barbauld's poems would undoubtedly have left a vivid impression. One such poem, recited by a young Thomas Denman (1779-1854), later to be Attorney General in Lord Grey's Whig administration, was 'Written on a Marble', penned, McCarthy notes, during the war for American independence. In it Barbauld described military 'heroes' as 'overgrown schoolboys/who scuffle for empires and toys.' War was a childish exploit to be outgrown.[94] This theme would continue in *Evenings at Home.* 'Things by their Right Names,' was the tale of a boy eager for a bedtime story about 'bloody murder'. Instead of murder, however, his father treated him to a story about a battle. When questioned, his father replied simply that he did 'not know of any murders half so bloody.'[95] In 'The Cost of War' a young boy was advised not to 'lavish admiration upon such a pest of the human race as a *Conqueror*…nor ever think that a profession which binds a man to be the servile instrument of cruelty and injustice, is an *honourable* calling.'[96] For heterodox radicals, like Barbauld, the true hero was one who acted independently, rationally and selflessly for the betterment of others and expected, like a loving mother, little or no recognition for the services rendered.

[93] For discussion on distinctions between professional soldiers and the militia, see McCormack, *Independent Man*, pp.63-64.
[94] McCarthy, 'How Dissent made Anna Letitia Barbauld', p.62.
[95] Ibid., pp.150-152; McCarthy, 'The Celebrated Academy at Palgrave', pp. 312-313.
[96] Aikin and Barbauld, *Evenings at Home,* p.336.

Just how influential female teachers could be was amply demonstrated by Denman himself, who later wrote of his fond memories of Barbauld as an inspiring instructress. Denman would become a leading advocate of women's rights and a campaigner for universal education.[97] Likewise, the German scholar and translator, William Taylor (1765-1836), once a student at Palgrave, described Barbauld significantly as the 'mother of his mind'.[98] Indeed, as a Germanophile, Taylor's description conjures the image of primordial androgyny. Such comments lend weight to McCarthy's suggestion that a Palgrave education 'induced feminist sympathies' in its pupils.'[99] In much the same fashion, boys' schools run by Carpenter and Beard, both of whom maintained strong female presences via wives and daughters, produced pupils who would later on become public defenders and advocates of the women's rights movement.[100] The daughters of Beard and Carpenter attended lessons at their fathers' schools alongside the male pupils.[101] Unlike Barbauld's parents who, fearful of a loss of femininity, restricted their daughter's interactions with the boys that her father taught and limited her access, initially, to masculine subjects, such as Latin and Greek,[102] Mrs Carpenter seemed unconcerned when she referred to Mary and Anna as 'two complete schoolboys…'[103] According to Frank Prochaska, Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) had little interest in female accomplishments. She would later go on to assist her father at his school and become an important educationalist in her own right and though reluctant to be seen as an advocate of

[97] Barbauld, *Works*, vol. 1, p.xxix.
[98] Ibid., p.xxv.
[99] McCarthy, 'How Dissent made Anna Letitia Barbauld', p.319.
[100] Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians*, pp.134-135.
[101] Ibid., p.133.
[102] See Anna Letitia Le Breton (ed.), *Memoir of Mrs Barbauld* (London, George Bell and Sons, 1874), pp.24-25; William McCarthy, 'Barbauld [nee Aikin], Anna Letitia [Anna Laetitia] (1743-1825)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 30/08/2018.
[103] J. Estlin Carpenter, *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter* (London, 1879), p.8.

women's rights, demonstrating again the ambivalence towards sexual distinctions within this group of radicals, she would become a key figure in penal reform.[104]

In their blurring of the gendered private and public spheres, radical schools and text books would appear to have promoted and endorsed a profoundly different and more egalitarian model of domestic and state government. As Bannet notes, 'in their novels, conduct books, and tracts, Egalitarians sought to remodel the little society of the family according to the same principles of liberty, equality and independence'.[105] The traditional image of the humble female teacher or governess takes on a more revolutionary persona as the 'mother' of future citizens who might one day have the power to effect real change. In a seemingly explicit endorsement of this notion of the revolutionary private female persona effecting change in the minds of male pupils, Wollstonecraft argued that, 'public education, of every denomination, should be directed to form citizens; but if you wish to make good citizens, you must first exercise the affections of a son and a brother…for public affections, as well as public virtues, must ever grow out of the private character, or they are merely meteors that shoot athwart a dark sky, and disappear as they are gazed at and admired'.[106] The radical notion of egalitarian domesticity was seemingly framed in conscious opposition to what Christine de Bellaigue identifies as the emergence of an increasingly gendered and segregated 'rhetoric of domesticity'[107] among the growing middling and evangelical classes at this time. Barbauld was a prime example of how the domestic sphere of woman could, via the more private and subliminal channels of teaching, influence the broader public and conscious will, thus effecting by 'insensible gradations,'[108] her own emancipation and that of the majority of

[104] Frank Prochaska, 'Carpenter, Mary (1807-1877)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 01/09/2018.
[105] Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*, p.51.
[106] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.246.
[107] Christina De Bellaigue, *Educating Women: Schooling and Identity in England and France, 1800-1867* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), p.15.
[108] John Stuart Mill, 'The Spirit of the Age', in Gertrude Himmelfarb (ed.), *The Spirit of the Age: Victorian Essays* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2007), p.50.

men as well. For even within male-only institutions, a rational female presence, as demonstrated at Palgrave, could have a marked effect on male attitudes to women and society at large. Women of the middle to upper-classes may have felt their movements and interests increasingly circumscribed and prescribed by the private sphere but that sphere was by no means politically impotent or lacking in intellectual influence. It would be misleading when considering radical examples, to suggest, as Anna Clark does, that within seemingly universalist discourses women were associated purely with, and restricted by, 'tender sensibility'.[109] As Gleadle points out, 'the place of women within radical sub-cultures was…far more complex, and potentially empowering, than is often conveyed.'[110] The educational role of Barbauld would seem amply to demonstrate this.

A Shared Vision

Further endorsing the notion that the private home might also be the site of the public sphere, heterodox radicals were notable for the mutual and reciprocal relationships and collaborations between, male and female friends, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, demonstrating, arguably, how porous were the social and intellectual boundaries perceived to be between the sexes, even if certain customary principles and practices were maintained. While the sharing of work and responsibility between husband and wife was quite common amongst the lower orders, as Dorothy Thompson highlights,[111] amongst the middle classes, the gendered influence of separate spheres was increasingly noticeable from the early nineteenth century, which makes the heterodox radical advocacy of shared responsibility appear all the more distinctive. In addition to the Aikin/Barbaulds, one of the most famous

[109] Anna Clark, '1798 as the Defeat of Feminism: women, patriotism and politics', in Terry Brotherstone, Anna Clark and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and the Making of Modern Britain 1798-1848* (Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 2006), pp.90-91.
[110] Kathryn Gleadle, 'The age of physiological reformers': rethinking gender and domesticity in the age of reform,' in Arthur Burns and Joanna Innes (eds.), *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.201.
[111] See Dorothy Thompson, 'Women, Work and Politics in Nineteenth-Century England: The Problem of Authority', in Jane Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.57-81.

married couples of the era was Godwin and Wollstonecraft. Had Mary's life not been tragically cut short in child birth, it had been their plan, so Godwin explained, to provide by their 'joint labours'.[112] Interestingly, in Holmes' biography of Coleridge, he points to Coleridge's hopes of joint partnership with his new wife, Sara, in a 'full-time journalistic post in London; a private school in Bristol'. Holmes also refers to Coleridge's third edition of the *Watchman* in which the poet wrote of ideal wives as 'free and equal companions' with their husbands, and of Wollstonecraft's 'feminist views'.[113] The extremely close, though seemingly unconsummated, relationship between the Irish-born socialists, William Thompson (1775-1833) and Anna Wheeler (c.1785-1848) might be offered as a further example. In the introductory letter that accompanied *An Appeal to One Half the Human Race* (1825), Thompson wrote that to separate his thoughts from Wheeler's was 'now to me impossible, so amalgamated are they with my own: to the public this is indifferent; but to me how flattering, could I hope that any suggestions of mine had so amalgamated themselves in your mind!'[114] If somewhat adulatory, the image of intellectual oneness is nonetheless apparent and this oneness was to be encouraged across society by 'real and comprehensive knowledge, physical and moral, equally and impartially given by education and by all other means to both sexes'. From this, 'women then might exert in a free career with men their faculties of mind and body, to whatever degree developed, in pursuit of happiness by means of exertion, as men do'.[115] The mutual and 'joint' exercise of labour between men and women was a common theme in the lives and works of heterodox radicals. The mutual benefit of equal partners is reflected time and again in the literature and the lives of heterodox radicals, again speaking to the mediating principles of the concept of psychological androgyny. Another notable

[112] William Godwin, 'Letter 172, October 1797', *The Letters of William Godwin*, vol. 2, ed. by Pamela Clemit (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p.250.
[113] Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions*, p.107.
[114] William Thompson and Anna Wheeler, *An Appeal of One Half the Human Race* (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), p.vi.
[115] Ibid., pp.xiii-xiv.

partnership was that between daughter and father, Maria and Richard Edgeworth. Again, like *Evenings at Home*, the responsibility of writing *Practical Education* fell almost evenly to father and daughter and although it is not known which sections were written by whom, it is believed that Maria dealt with the less technical and admittedly more feminine subjects such as 'Taste and imagination' and 'Female Accomplishments'.[116] The pronoun 'we' was, however, used throughout indicating on paper at least equal status between the two authors.

Although boys are referred to more often than girls, and certain tasks are geared towards sex-appropriate learning, however, the general tenor of the work and the general references to 'children' would suggest that girls were very much included. Parents concerned for 'female character and understanding', were directed to Maria Edgeworth's earlier work *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795). Their comment on this is worth noting here: 'Our opinions concerning the female character and understanding have been fully detailed in a former publication; and, unwilling to fatigue by repetition, we have touched but slightly upon these subjects in our chapters on Temper, Female Accomplishments, Prudence, and Economy.'[117] Though adverting to gendered distinctions in society and warning girls of the risks of stepping beyond these, there is a hint of impatience implied with the need for such discussion. Interestingly, *Letters for Literary Ladies*, presents, in the form of correspondence between two men of seemingly opposed opinion, a less than stereotypical description of female character, arguing that if a girl's education was not ordinarily designed to make her into a musician, painter, or poetess, nor a botanist, mathematician or chemist, that it should nonetheless instil the 'habit of industry and attention, the love of knowledge and the power of reasoning.' These would, it was maintained by the somewhat coy advocate of the 'rights of woman', enable the girl to attain excellence in any pursuit of science or of literature'.[118]

[116] Christina Edgeworth Colvin, 'Edgeworth, Richard Lovell (1744-1817)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 20/08/2018.
[117] Maria and Richard Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, p.viii.
[118] Maria Edgeworth, *Letters for Literary Ladies* (London, J. Johnson, 1795), pp.73-74.

'Excellence' was not a virtue usually attributed to women. It was hoped that such habits would allow the girl and her future husband to converse as 'equals' and live 'as friends'.[119] If not explicit, in the seeming eradication of sexual hierarchy in this final sentiment, the heterodox reinterpretation of Platonic Uranianism might be spied.

Male/Female Emulation and the Risks of Gender Inversion and Effeminacy

The merits of coeducation and emulation were common themes amongst heterodox radicals. Were girls to be 'liberally, classically, philosophically, and usefully educated', remarked the radical author and actress, Mary Robinson (c.1758-1800), whose own education had been extremely disorderly with an emphasis upon 'accomplishments';[120] were girls able to 'feel their mental equality with the imperious rulers,' the result, Robinson argued, would be the excitation of 'the noblest emulation…'[121] For Wollstonecraft, allowing boys and girls to 'pursue the same studies together' in public schools would not only militate against the development of 'those sexual distinctions that taint the mind,' but would allow children of both sexes to form a 'just opinion' of themselves through emulation and the 'jostling of equality.'[122] Some years later, the freethought lecturer and advocate of women's rights, Eliza Sharples (1803-1852), and later the wife of Carlile, believed that sexual integration at school and beyond would encourage women to become, 'wise in mental emulation and social distinction with their brother man. More equality, springing from more knowledge, will be the order of human society, more harmony and more love the consequence…'[123]

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[119] Ibid., p.72.
[120] Martin, J. Levy, 'Robinson [née Darby], Mary [Perdita] (c.1758-1800)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 04/09/2008.
[121] Mary Robinson (née Derby) *A letter to the women of England on the injustice of mental subordination* (London, 1799), pp.94-95. The *Letter* was published initially under Robinson's pen-name Anne Frances Randall. It was later republished under her own name as *Thoughts on the Condition of Women, and the Injustice of Mental Subordination*.
[122] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.259. 'Public' is used to describe something other than private home schooling.
[123] Elizabeth Sharples, *The Isis: A London Weekly Publication, Edited by a Lady* (London, 1832), p.246.

Such ideas, however, raised in the minds of their opponents the spectres of hermaphroditism and sexual indeterminacy. In contrast to radicals who condemned the monastic and segregated nature of boarding schools for encouraging celibacy, evangelicals such as the novelist and poet Clara Reeve (1729-1807) asserted, somewhat paradoxically, that coeducation would have the same result, with a race of celibates schooled only in the virtues of Platonic 'friendship' and incapable of producing healthy citizens for the future.[124] Brisson's description of 'indifferentiation' that 'blocks all activity, hence all generation, and arrests everything in a union that is permanent and so…sterile', comes to mind.[125] In Reeve's reference to Platonic friendship we might note the allusion to the infertile and degenerative hermaphrodite. Invoking the classical ideal of the citizen-soldier and civic-responsibility, West warned of the creation of the masculine 'virago' or effeminate and foolish 'fribble' that a gender-neutral education would produce amongst the population: 'Let activity, energy, courage, and enterprise, particularly mark the boys…[and]…If we wish our girls to be happy, we must try to make them docile, contented, prudent and domestic.'[126] In endeavouring to prescribe one rule to all, West accused 'sciolists' of ridiculing 'all considerations' of sex by determining that 'till the age of puberty boys and girls ought to have the same mode of instruction'.[127] For conservatives, emulation was a masculine virtue. The need for emulation amongst boys was articulated time and again by evangelicals and more political radicals alike. West was a notable advocate of the principles of masculine emulation.[128] Writing in 1806, she argued that emulation, encouraged only within the competitive environment of boys' schools,

[124] Clara Reeve, *Plans of Education* (London, T. Hookham and J. Carpenter, 1792), pp.58-59.
[125] Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, p.58.
[126] West, *Letters to a Young Lady*, p.219. See Cohen's argument that emulation between girls was considered, 'unequivocally damaging,' in, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education', pp.23-24.
[127] West, *Letters to a Young Lady*, p.418.
[128] See Gail Baylis, 'West [née Iliffe], Jane (1758-1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 02/09/2018.

helped to foster manly appetites, including the desire to 'range abroad and forage for his family'.[129] In contrast, the uncompetitive domestic environment encouraged only effeminacy:

> …and if he has had a very tender and very assiduous mother, there will be a cause to apprehend…that the timidity or effeminacy of his manners may cast a ridicule over his moral purity; which, when he comes to venture into mixed society, he will perhaps endeavour to obviate, not by the assumption of hardihood, but, by the affectation, or even the practice, of vice.[130]

For West, 'vice' was a synonym of unnatural love. Though never explicitly mentioned, the spectre of the hermaphroditic or 'master-miss', vitiated by feminine softness indulged through the domestic sphere, is more than apparent. It is hardly surprising that, amongst more conservative figures, such as West, Knox and More, the complete reverse should be recommended for girls. The rigours of emulation and the rivalry that naturally ensued were considered completely inappropriate for the softer sex. The aggressive, self-assertive and gritty determination needed to succeed in the cut-throat public world of business and commerce, was not required in the quiet and secluded domestic sphere. Such characteristics were not conducive to the development of traditional female virtues like humility, patience and piety, all of which were better attended to in the home as the natural sphere of the girl and woman.[131] Deviation from this chastened path could have serious consequences. Entering into the heated debate in 1814 to disavow the mistaken notions of a 'considerable number' of 'ingenious writers', the radical Unitarian minister and schoolmaster, John Morell (1775-1840), pointed to how female intellectuals who, supposedly exchanging 'the needle…for the

[129] See West, *Letters to a Young Lady*, p. 219.
[130] Ibid., pp.222-223.
[131] See Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1796)

pen', were described in the most unnatural and hermaphroditic terms: perceived as 'more terrible than the modern chevalier D'Eon [sic] [132] or the Amazon of antiquity'.[133]

Heterodox radicals such as Barbauld and Wollstonecraft were well aware of the well-established social pit-falls that awaited any sign of female intellectual precocity, with the Unitarian writer and journalist, Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) adding that it 'was not thought proper for young ladies to study very conspicuously; and especially with pen in hand…'[134] Writing in *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (1797), Darwin argued that, 'great apparent strength of character, however excellent is liable to alarm both her own and the other sex.'[135] Very much like the figure of the hermaphrodite in theories of Classical republicanism, the female intellectual was thought, according to Anne C. Villa, to trade physical for mental procreancy, thereby sapping society of its strength and fecundity.[136] Again, Peacock would capture this sexual double standard to great satirical effect in *Melincourt* (1817), explaining through his heroine Anthelia how the taste for, 'intellectual pleasures [in women] is almost equivalent to taking the veil; and though not absolutely a vow of perpetual celibacy, it has almost always the same practical tendency.'[137]

Yet, where radicals such as Darwin expressed reservations over appropriate levels of vigour in female education, advising that it should make a girl, 'appear to be pliant rather than robust; to be ready to take impressions rather than to be decidedly mark'd', such comments need to be considered in context. Darwin's use of 'appear' is noteworthy. The word smacks

[132] The Chevalier d'Eon (1728-1810), a French diplomat and spy, identified as female and dressed as a woman for much of his adult life. See Simon Burrows, Jonathan Conlin, Russell Goulbourne and Valerie Mainz (eds.), *The Chevalier D'Eon and his Worlds* (London, Continuum, 2010). Chevalier d'Eon and the 'Amazon of antiquity' were used to represent sexual inversion.
[133] John Morell, *Reasons for the Classical Education of Children of Both Sexes* (London, 1814), p.9.
[134] Harriet Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography* (London, 1877), pp.100-10. For discussion on the confining of female intellectuals during the French Enlightenment see Anne C. Vila, '"Ambiguous Beings": Marginality, Melancholy, and the Femme Savante', in Knott and Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, pp.53-69.
[135] Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (Derby, 1797), pp.9-11. Italics my own.
[136] See Villa, 'Ambiguous Beings', p.55.
[137] Peacock, *Melincourt* vol. 2 (London, 1817), p.9.

of a certain disdain for contemporary notions of sexual excellence. Darwin may well have 'appeared' concerned for protecting feminine delicacy but this did not stop him from supporting his two illegitimate daughters, Susan and Mary Parker, in setting up a boarding school for girls; [138] nor did it stop him from recommending that girls be introduced to a range of topics, including science, mechanics and the theory and practice of agriculture: subjects hardly designed to foster female docility. Although some of the descriptions in Darwin's *Plan* would appear at first sight to endorse the sexual double standard supported by More, most notably his lauding of 'the mild and retiring virtues', knowledge of Darwin's noted links to other heterodox radicals, and too his theories of human development, suggest a marked ambivalence towards traditional notions of psycho-sexual difference. Alongside his stereotypical description of female delicacy and charm was adverted the desire that, for personal and future well-being and support, 'internal strength and activity of mind,' be 'superadded' in order to 'compleat [sic] the female character'.[139] Though quick to assert that scientific and mechanical subjects would not deter girls from fulfilling their natural roles as wives and mothers, for pregnancy and motherhood were central to the female experience at that time, as Craciun points out,[140] Darwin stressed, much like Wollstonecraft, that a comprehensive and useful education would equip girls with the necessary tools to 'transact the business or combat the evils of life.'[141] Radicals such as Wollstonecraft were more than aware that motherhood was the natural and logical path pursued by the majority of women at that time and we should perhaps not be surprised to see heterodox radicals arguing at times that a comprehensive and gender-neutral education would support the vast majority of women in their 'natural' duties as wives and mothers.[142] Nor should we be surprised to see references

[138] McNeil, 'Darwin, Erasmus (1731-1802)'.
[139] Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education*, pp.9-11.
[140] Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*, pp.64-65.
[141] Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education*, pp.9-11.
[142] Chernock is surprised that radicals such as John Anderson, the founder of the first Scottish coeducational university, who believed the minds of men and women to be equal, should argue that 'the goal of acquiring

to motherly duties placed alongside expressions of hope for the development of female enterprise and public engagement. The social hardships and privations suffered by widows and single women across the country were too numerous for female education to be anything but 'robust' and 'mark'd'. 'There are situations in a married state,' wrote Darwin, 'which may call forth all the energies of the mind in the care, education, or provision, for a family; which the inactivity, folly, or death of a husband may render necessary.'[143] Wollstonecraft, Barbauld and Aikin could each speak of those moments when a woman was called upon to discharge the duties of 'father and mother'.[144] They also alluded to the vexations and perils of the single, unmarried life, to which Wollstonecraft and Aikin could both attest. And though married, Barbauld could relate well to examples of women forced to support families in which husbands and fathers were incapacitated. The state of dependency was detrimental to all and cast a shadow over 'civil' society. Aikin hoped that there would come a time when, 'the politic father will not leave as a 'legacy' to his daughters the injunction to conceal their wit, their learning, and even their good sense, in deference to the 'natural malignity' with which most men regard every woman of sound understanding and cultivated mind'.[145] Many of the radical proposals for female education, therefore, had first to quell the concerns of a significant portion of society upon matters of appropriate female conduct.

Conservative and Evangelical Opposition

The degree of success achieved by heterodox radicals by the turn of the nineteenth century in promoting and effecting pedagogic texts, curriculums and learning environments which blurred the gendered distinctions between the public and private spheres and encouraged the virtue of emulation between the sexes, might be gauged not only by the founding of the *Anti-*

"general knowledge" would always be the female's return to the home'. See Chernock, 'Cultivating Woman', p.522.

[143] Ibid., pp.9-11.

[144] Lucy Aikin, *Epistles on Women and Other Works*, ed. by Anne K. Mellor and Michelle Levy (Ontario, Canada, Broadview Editions, 2011), p.83.

[145] Aikin, *Epistles*, pp.vi-vii.

Jacobin Review in 1798 but by the founding in 1802 of the *Guardian of Education*. Established by Trimmer, the journal coincided, not unintentionally, with the founding of the *Society for the Suppression of Vice*.[146] The objectives of both were to raise morality and stem the flow of secular, anti-religious – and one might add androgynous or effeminate - ideas that might be imbibed by impressionable youths through the 'abuse of the press'.[147] A noted supporter of Trimmer and her journal was West. In her popular conduct literature, most notably *Letters to a Young Lady* (1806) – a seeming rebuttal of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*[148] – West promoted Trimmer's concern that 'a settled design to overturn the established faith in this country, and to illuminize the minds of the rising generation, are the chief motives of the innumerable books for the education of youth which have deluged the nation.'[149] The growing popularity of children's fiction and non-fiction for use in the home, and the success of works such as *Evenings at Home*, was of increasing concern for conservatives and evangelicals who wished to keep a firm grip upon the impressionable minds of the young.[150] It must be noted, however, that such concerns were not peculiar to conservative evangelicals. Wollstonecraft warned that ignorant men and women allowed their imaginations to 'revel in the unnatural and the meretricious'.[151] Although most educationalists of the time offered advice on appropriate literature for children and parents, very much like the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, Trimmer used her journal to root out and shame undesirable literature.[152] For Trimmer, the unread children's book was to be approached with caution and viewed as a potential vehicle for 'infidel and licentious tenets':

[146] The Society for the Suppression of Vice succeeded the Society for the Reformation of Manners established in 1691.
[147] P.M. Heath, *Works of Mrs Trimmer:1741-1810* (Saarbrucken, Lap Lambert Academic, 2010), p.15. See also Fyfe, 'Reading Children's Books', p.456.
[148] See Baylis, 'West [nee Iliffe], Jane (1758-1852)'.
[149] West, *Letters to a Young Lady*, pp.376-377.
[150] Fyfe, 'Reading Children's Books', p.465.
[151] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.274.
[152] Heath, *Works*, p.257. Maria Edgeworth also advised the judicious use of scissors.

> …in all its stages, from the simplest form of elementary instruction to the polished history and elaborate disposition; that without the utmost care on the part of parents and tutors, it will pervert the mind, and corrupt the hearts of the rising generation, and prove an inexhaustible source of private misery, and public calamity.'[153]

In fact, evangelicals such as Trimmer, Reeve and William Barrow (c.1754-1836), a theologian and headmaster of the academy in Soho Square, London, were quick to discern a pernicious trend in the programmes of education and textbooks emerging from the heterodox radical press from the turn of the century.[154] If Samuel Johnson, as Levy points out, was dismissive of Barbauld's 'educational exertions' to 'suckle fools, and chronicle small-beer', those such as Trimmer were not.[155] Indeed, the opposition voiced towards war and heroism in *Evenings at Home* were viewed by Trimmer as decidedly unpatriotic and contrary to the Old Testament.[156] Writing in the *Guardian of Education* in 1802, Barrow warned of how:

> The zeal of jacobinism [sic] never sleeps. It neglects no opportunity of gaining proselytes to its cause. It disdains no instrument that may, in any degree promote its baleful purposes. Our children and our populace are the first objects on which it would exert its powers; and their instructions or perversion its favourite engine of operation. Here then we have the testimony of our enemies in favour of the truth and nature, of the doctrine which I wish to recommend; the influence of early impressions upon the mind in the future conduct of man: and the attention they would bestow on the instruction of the rising generation, with a view to the expulsion of received opinions, and the destruction of established principles, it will be our duty and interest to exert in support of government, and the laws, of truth, morality, and religion.[157]

[153] Ibid., pp.252-253.
[154] See Reeve, *Plans of Education*, pp.58-59; Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1800); Sarah Trimmer, *Guardian of Education* vol. 1 (London, May to December 1802); William Barrow, *An Essay on Education*, 2 vols. (London, F. & C. Rivington, 1802).
[155] See Levy, 'The Radical Education of Evenings at Home', p.2.
[156] Fyfe, 'Reading Children's Books', p.463,
[157] Barrow, *An Essay on Education*, p.329.

Even when the Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, Barbauld's *Lessons for Children* and Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787),[158] elicited praise from Trimmer's evangelical journal for sensible advice, such works rarely received 'the total commendation of the self-appointed guardian of education' owing to their worrying silence on matters of religion and moral guardianship and their more egalitarian approach to issues of sexual character and class.[159]

Yet, it is perhaps appropriate at this point to raise a caveat. Just as with distinctions between private and public schooling, when distinguishing between what we might call conservative and radical plans of education we need to be justly appreciative of the extent to which ideas and influences between the two often coincided and overlapped. This is most apparent when we consider the ideas developed by More. Much like her radical contemporaries, More advocated a comprehensive education for girls which though including the ornamental subjects consisted of more intellectual training. More recommended 'Watts' or Duncan's little book of Logic, some parts of Mr Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and bishop Butler's Analogy'. 'Dry tough reading', as More called it, was useful as a 'habit, and wholesome as an exercise'.[160] More is an interesting example and like Barbauld has attracted harsh criticism for her anti-feminist promotion of female subordination. There are some striking if somewhat superficial similarities between the two women, notably their thoughts on female education. Much like Barbauld, More has been the focus of recent revisionist study, with scholars such as Kathryn Sutherland, Anne Stott and more recently Harriet Guest suggesting that More's conservatism was designed to help 'empower women'.[161] In place of

[158] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (London, J. Johnson, 1787).
[159] Heath, *Works of Mrs Trimmer*, pp.191-194.
[160] More, *Strictures*, p.76.
[161] See Kathryn Sutherland, Writings on education and conduct: arguments for female improvement, in Vivien Jones (ed.), Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.25-45; Anne Stott, 'Evangelicalism and Enlightenment: The Educational Agenda of Hannah More', in Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds.),4*Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), pp.41-56; Harriet Guest, 'Hannah More and Conservative Feminism', in Jennie

anti-feminist sentiments, a form of conservative feminism is revealed, they argue, and one that promoted 'the interests of women within and not as a threat to the existing social order.'[162] Like Barbauld, More was a gifted child and as the daughter of a seemingly enlightened schoolmaster and classicist, was taught Latin and mathematics. Accusations of anti-feminism, many of them levelled by feminist scholars of the 1970s, would appear to be aimed at a lady who, like Barbauld, was the beneficiary of a comprehensive and masculine education, but who, like Barbauld again, advocated the importance of the female domesticity. According to S.J. Skedd, More was 'educated to earn a living' and along with her sisters ran a boarding-school for girls. As a noted bluestocking More was in close touch with members of the London literati such as David Garrick, Joshua Reynolds and Samuel Johnson and through these contacts nurtured a successful career as a playwright.[163] More was by no means a meek and dependent woman, nor had her education fitted her to be one. Despite her evangelical position, as Stott points out, More's Christianity was 'infused with Lockean principles', and as a member of the Clapham Sect, associated with William Wilberforce, More saw it as her duty to 'change society for the better through political action, social reform and moral reformation'.[164] More and her evangelical associates were, moreover, convinced of the merits of a rational education and of the importance of science. Nor were More's opinions only applauded by fellow evangelicals and Anglicans; the Unitarian writer and journalist, Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) in an article on female devotion for the *Monthly Repository* in 1822, praised More for her 'elevated and noble works'.[165]

Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (eds.), *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.158-170.

[162] Guest, 'Hannah More and Conservative Feminism', p.158-159.

[163] S.J. Skedd, 'More, Hannah (1745-1833)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 21/08/2018.

[164] See Stott, 'Evangelicalism and Enlightenment', p.43.

[165] Harriet Martineau, 'Female Writers on Practical Divinity', *Monthly Repository* (October 1822), p.594. In this article and others, including one on female education, in which a relatively moderate position on female capabilities was assumed, Martineau used the pen name 'Discipulus'.

There are a number of instances in which More's ideas and opinions would appear on the surface at least to overlap with those of heterodox radicals such as Wollstonecraft and Barbauld. Most notable is More's implicit reference to psychological androgyny as an example of higher sensibility:

> Co-operation and not competition is indeed the clear principle we wish to see reciprocally adopted by those higher minds in each sex which really approximates the nearest to each other.[166]

Yet, when we dig deeper, ideas that on the surface appear to be the same – to have the same sources and the same objectives – are in reality quite different. More's interpretation of the concept of androgyny was not to be found in the meeting of like-minds but in the co-operative understanding and compromise between unlike minds. Despite the presence of androgyny in More's work and in that of evangelical figures such as the visionary Joanna Southcott (1750-1814), as Taylor notes, 'the preoccupation with sexual difference was an important feature of the evangelical revival as a whole'.[167] Despite the very practical nature of More's intervention into educational reform, her interpretation of androgyny was invested with a hierarchical spiritualism akin to that of Boehme and enshrined in the biblical doctrine of 'one flesh' as will be discussed in the following chapter. More's objectives were clearly gendered. 'To woman', wrote More, 'moral excellence is the grand object of education; and of moral excellence, domestic life is to woman the proper sphere.' A girl was not encouraged to question or analyse the facts before her but instead to 'accommodate herself [to] the station she was born to fill.'[168] More's beliefs are illustrated by her use of 'born to fill'. Indeed, one such distinction between More's more conservative and orthodox approach to education and the more egalitarian approach adopted by heterodox radicals such as Barbauld,

[166] More, *Strictures*, pp.217-218.
[167] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.171.
[168] More, *Strictures*, pp.217-218.

might actually be found in More's support of the seeming Lockean paradox that the principle of universal human rationality did not obviate nature's need for sexual difference. For More, as indeed for many evangelicals and radicals alike, men and women were essentially different and where some approximation might exist between the highest minds, it was an approximation that could never amount to true intellectual parity. The scales would always be tipped in favour of a man's peculiar intellectual and physical strengths that best suited him to the competitive and aggressive public arena. It was absurd to talk of equality between the sexes in anything other than the basic ability to improve within preordained areas of God-given virtue, duty and function. Cooperation was the only sensible mode of interaction and to distort this through mistaken and perverse notions of equality and natural rights would be to threaten the stability and welfare of society through unnecessary and enfeebling opposition.

While heterodox radicals believed that education promised a future in which woman's role would become increasingly varied, More, in contrast, believed that 'the enlargement of the female understanding' through education, would erase utterly all 'contentions for equality'. Instead of questioning the laws of nature and hierarchy, reason in women would act as a vital check to social and sexual transgressions and to notions of sexual equality, 'which female smatterers so anxiously maintain.'[169] Indeed, 'for by shewing [sic] them the possible powers of the human mind, you will bring them to see the littleness of their own'.[170] A review of More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* in Johnson's *Analytical Review* in 1799 observed how, 'while Europe agitates the important questions on which depend the virtue and the happiness of the human species', More advised that 'woman is to remain quiescent in the universal fermentation:

> amidst the contention of nations, her heart is not to glow in the cause of freedom, nor her understanding to kindle with the lover of truth: philosophical investigation on the subjects

[169] Ibid., pp.217-218.
[170] Ibid., p.74.

> alone deserving serious attention, as involving the best interests of mankind, would destroy that 'graceful propriety, without which, however knowing or active, woman cannot be *amiable*.[171]

More's advice to women to maintain a sexual excellence may appear similar to that promoted by Barbauld and Aikin who, like Wollstonecraft, warned against creating 'female warriors' and rapacious Amazons who in turn would merely serve to heighten the sexual divisions in society.[172] Yet we need, perhaps, to be more appreciative of opinions and actions that illustrate determined and confident belief and those that exhibit cautionary realism. To 'a great degree', Wollstonecraft argued, 'men and women must be educated…by the opinions and manners of the society they live in. In every age there has been a stream of popular opinion that has carried all before it, and given a family character, as it were, to the century. It may then fairly be inferred, that, till society be differently constituted, much cannot be expected from education.'[173] For all her apparent radicalness, Wollstonecraft was more than aware of the impediments to social change. In what may well have been written in response to Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman*, J. Burton argued in *Lectures on Female Education and Manners* (1793), that despite the 'capacities of each sex' being equal and assertions of male superiority being 'without proof', it was simply not, 'expedient for the purposes of society at that time for girls to be educated as boys'.[174]

Viewed by some scholars as anti-feminist, many of Barbauld's opinions and personal decisions might be attributed to the same cautious principles. Barbauld, very much like Coleridge, with whom she was initially close, is an interesting example of how belief in the mediating principles of the concept of the unsexed mind might make an advocate appear at

[171] Ibid., p.479.
[172] Ibid., pp.4-5. See also Michelle Levy, 'Lucy Aikin's Historiography', in James and Inkster (eds.), *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle*, pp.158-159. Levy highlights Aikin's refusal to exemplify women in her court histories.
[173] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.86.
[174] J. Burton, *Lectures on Female Education and Manners*, vol.1 (London, 1793), p.155.

times reticent and ambivalent. Her refusal in 1774 to accept Elizabeth Montagu's invitation to become the principal of a girls' school, and then again in 1804 to join a women-only periodical established by Maria Edgeworth, have been dismissed by some as evidence of anti-feminism. In asking why Barbauld's 'vigorous radicalism' should falter when it came to her own sex, Taylor admits that the question cannot be 'confidently answered'.[175] Despite taking a radical position in many areas, there are a number of examples in which Barbauld counselled women to keep to their rightful station. Two notable examples are 'The Rights of Woman' written in 1792 as a poetical response to Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman* in which the latter had criticised Barbauld's poem, 'To a Lady, with some painted Flowers', as extolling sexual stereotypes, and an essay published in 1773 in which Barbauld maintained that there was 'a cast of manners peculiar and becoming to each age, sex and profession…Each is perfect in its kind. A woman as a woman: a tradesman as a tradesman.'[176] As Taylor points out, Barbauld was no enthusiast for democracy.[177] There are notable parallels, however, between Barbauld's description and the sentiments on class and position expressed by fellow-reformer, the Quaker author and philanthropist, Priscilla Wakefield (1750-1832), who despite calling for greater educational and occupational opportunities for women, believed in the benefits of a class system and in preserving the feminine 'limits of modesty and decorum'.[178]

Barbauld's 'Rights of Woman', not published until 1825, is particularly interesting because of its ambiguity. If, as Lucy Newlyn suggests, the poem was 'the work of a momentary irritation', and Barbauld's decision not to publish might suggest that, it is also clear that

[175] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.184.
[176] Barbauld, *Works*, vol. 2, p.194. See also Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.184.
[177] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.184.
[178] Ann B. Shteir, 'Wakefield [nee Bell], Priscilla (1750-1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 22/08/2018.

Barbauld was keen for the 'universal case [to] overwhelm any sexual division of labour or love':[179]

> Then abandon each ambitious thought/ Conquest or rule thy heart shall feebly move/ In Nature's school, by her soft maxims taught/ That separate rights are lost in mutual love.[180]

Although seemingly a paean to woman's subordination, Barbauld expresses a sentiment strikingly similar to something later used or perhaps even copied by Barmby in his article on the 'Woman-Man-Power', in which he pointed to the 'common error' or tendency in gendered politics to see the two sexual natures as different. Thus, argued Barmby, was the 'subject' sexed and the 'female reign' proclaimed.[181] Though far from opposed to the mutual improvement of both sexes, Barbauld would appear nonetheless to be wary of those who would seek to replace one imperial extreme with another and 'bid proud Man his boasted rule resign/ And kiss the golden sceptre of thy reign.'[182] It can be argued that the language used to describe the new female 'reign' was consciously masculinised in order to contrast it with the more gender-neutral language of conciliation and mediation. Yet again, in *Evenings at Home* examples might be found of Barbauld's ambivalent and cautionary approach. 'The Female Choice', would at first glance appear to offer yet another rather stark and conservative choice to a young girl about to set foot upon the adult stage. One female figure decked in sparkling finery offers the girl a life of 'perpetual…ever-varying amusements', free from 'restraint…toils…[and]…dull tasks…' The other figure, dressed in plain and sober garb offers a life of prudent and useful 'HOUSEWIFERY'. The choice was between a life of *useless* dissipation or *useful* yet selfless and mundane responsibility. While the tale is offered as a contribution to the growing debate on middle- to upper-class female education and its

[179] Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, p.76.
[180] Barbauld, *Works*, vol. 2, p.187.
[181] Barmby, 'The Woman-Man-Power', p.269.
[182] Barbauld, 'The Rights of Woman' (London, J. Johnson, 1792).

focus upon useless 'accomplishments', there is in the image of the 'sincere' housewife the vision of a different future: 'when work is over, I can dance too'. In other words, present toils would result in future freedoms.[183] There is acceptance and acknowledgement that the life of the majority of women would, at that time, revolve around the home and while that continued to be the case, girls should be educated in a way that aided rather than prevented contentment. The revolution of the mind would work by subtle incremental shifts in practice and expectation. Thus, to use Hobb's insights into Plato and his radical method of teaching, the Socratic method of instruction employed in *Evenings at Home*, might allow the teacher to 'accommodate both the ideals to which students should aspire and the reality that [the] immediate audience' experienced.[184]

But Wollstonecraft's radicalism, as with Barbauld's conservatism on issues of women, is perhaps at times also overstated. Though undoubtedly forceful in promoting the rights of women, there is much that unites the two women and recent scholarship on Barbauld is beginning to reveal this. Neither Barbauld nor Wollstonecraft believed it would appear, that sexual difference should be the motivating force behind the restructuring of society, nor behind the direction and impetus of any other person's work. Despite feeling compelled to enter the gendered debate on behalf of women, Wollstonecraft wished to see 'the distinction of sex confounded in society', except for where love animated the 'behaviour'.[185] Seemingly concerned about the visible trend in society towards gender specific political movements after 1832, Aikin argued that gender had to be made 'unexceptional' and the desire for 'exemplars' rejected, if the natural rights of all were to be achieved.[186] White argues that feminist issues were simply not central to Barbauld's beliefs as they were to Wollstonecraft, Hays and

[183] Aikin and Barbauld, *Evenings at Home*, pp.232-233.
[184] Hobbs, 'Female Imagery in Plato', p.266.
[185] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.121.
[186] Levy, 'Lucy Aikin's Historiography', p.158.

Harriet Martineau.[187] And yet, as White and others point out, 'Barbauld's simultaneous resistance to participating in a "female junto" [Edgeworth's journal] and her acute awareness of gender politics indicate that the binary terms of feminist/anti-feminist may not be sufficient to a contemporary understanding of her literary, political, and religious writings'.[188] Barbauld's seeming disinterest in female-only ventures and her ambivalence towards notions of equality need to be viewed in the context not only of the instability of the times and the reputation of heterodox radicalism but of her own noticeable deviations from Rational Dissenting orthodoxies as well. Barbauld's radical opinions and associations led to the once friendly Horace Walpole describing her in hermaphroditic terms as 'the virago Barbauld'.[189] In 1775, in a quarrel between Barbauld and Gilbert Wakefield, over the former's inappropriate use of the language of love in religious devotion, Wakefield described Barbauld as a 'Platonic visionary'. When Hays wrote some years later in 1792 in support of Barbauld, Wakefield referred to both as Amazons and 'Viragos', employing the derogatory imagery of sexual inversion and hermaphroditism and linking these abnormalities to the study of Platonism.[190] In describing religious devotion as 'carrying the mind out of itself, and powerfully [refining] the affections from everything gross, low and selfish,'[191] Barbauld's language would appear very much to reflect a Platonic influence, and a distinct difference between the anti-Platonising concerns of Priestley and Wakefield. Priestley's concerns over Barbauld's 'Devotional Taste' would suggest that Barbauld favoured a more egalitarian model of devotion rather than that modelled on Priestley's 'hierarchical/filial'

[187] White, *Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, p.35.
[188] Daniel E. White, '"With Mrs Barbauld it is different": Dissenting Heritage and the Devotional Taste', in Knott and Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, p.475.
[189] Janowitz, 'Amiable and radical sociability', p.71.
[190] Gilbert Wakefield, *A General Reply to the Arguments Against the Enquiry into Public Worship* (London, Johnson, 1792), p.20.
[191] Anna Barbauld, *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, ed. by Lucy Aikin, vol. 2 (London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), p.246.

understanding.[192] As Deidre Coleman notes, despite her admiration for Priestley, Barbauld was 'never a disciple', criticising Priestley's ideas as too masculine and lacking the feminine virtues of sympathy, affection and sociability.[193] It is interesting that as a fellow Rational Dissenter and as the daughter of his Warrington colleague, that Wakefield should accuse Barbauld of stepping out of her sphere, again highlighting the differences within the radicalism of Rational Dissent and the growing distance not only between the more orthodox religious group but between its more conventional radical fringe and their more heterodox radical peers.

Wollstonecraft's comments on women have been described at times as teetering on anti-feminist, even misogynistic.[194] But as with the concept of androgyny in the Romantic era, much of the criticism aimed at Barbauld's anti-feminism hails from second-wave feminists of the 1970s.[195] In a fascinating article offering new reasons as to why Barbauld rejected Montagu's invite to teach at a girls' school, McCarthy blames Aikin for a rather skewed presentation of her aunt's rejection in her edited version of Barbauld's *Works* published in 1825. Aikin allowed readers to assume that Barbauld's comments had been addressed to Montagu when they had in fact been addressed to Rochemont. The result was that Barbauld appeared to rebuke a 'project cherished by feminists from Mary Astell to Virginia Woolf', and that was the dream of equal schooling for women and men. Such comments would be read by men of the era with approval and increasingly by women with 'disgust and outrage'.[196] It is interesting that McCarthy should suggest that a review of *Works* published in the *Repository* that recommended Barbauld's 'good sense' on the matter of female education

[192] Deirdre Coleman, 'Firebrands, letters and flowers: Mrs Barbauld and the Priestleys', in Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (eds.), *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain 1770-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.88.
[193] Ibid., p.84.
[194] See Barbara Caine, 'Women', in Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.45.
[195] For details of this see William McCarthy, 'Why Anna Letitia Barbauld Refused to Head a Women's College: New Facts, New story', *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 23, no.3 (2001), p.365, ft.1.
[196] Ibid., p.350.

as ‘a caution to projectors in female education’, may well have been written by the then Unitarian editor, Robert Aspland, the more conservative and orthodox predecessor of Fox.[197] Again, the evidence of a heterodox radical network on the fringes of Rational Dissent, of which Barbauld and Fox were both members, is notable in McCarthy’s footnote. Importantly for McCarthy, Barbauld addressed her thoughts on the girls’ school privately to her then fiancé, Rochemont, shortly before their marriage, because as McCarthy suggests, the idea of teaching at a girl’s school was actually advanced by Rochemont himself as a means of supplementing his own meagre Dissenting minister’s income. Importantly, this was prior to the newly-married couple taking over at Palgrave Academy in July 1774. Rather than a rebuke to girls’ schooling it was, according to McCarthy, more than likely to have been a rebuke to Rochemont for wishing to capitalise on Barbauld’s achievements in order to support them both. ‘But how can it be thought,’ wrote Barbauld, ‘that a Scheme, which throws upon me the whole burthen of a School, should be easier than one, where I shou’d only take half.’[198] Quite in keeping with the notion of shared responsibility and partnership, mentioned above, Barbauld warned, ‘No, expect only from me my Share of the labours of life, *that* I will willingly take upon me; but do not depend upon your Wife for your whole establishment in life’. ‘nor will I ever marry’, wrote Barbauld, ‘if you cannot assume some employment, and fill some honourable station in Society upon the footing of your *own* Merit’. Sentiments that might be said to reflect a belief in the androgyny of human partnership and sentiments that would not look out of place if expressed by a young woman today.

Though written some years later, in light of the above, Barbauld’s chastising of the ‘reign’ of women in ‘Rights of Woman’ would appear to be a defence of shared and equal partnership rather than unequal control and slavery, as was the contemporary relationship between most women and men and indeed between the private and public spheres. Rather than a rejection

[197] For Aspland’s more conservative views of women see Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.26-27.
[198] See McCarthy, ‘Why Anna Letitia Barbauld Refused to Head a Women’s College’, p.353.

of girls' schooling, Barbauld's letter, should more appropriately, McCarthy urges, be read as a 'defence' against colonisation and to preserve some 'hours of leisure' in which to write and be intellectually creative.[199] In answer to objections that might be raised over Barbauld's seemingly excessive 'piling up of reasons' against teaching girls, McCarthy suggests, convincingly, that Barbauld's own stifled upbringing by her mother might well have put her off inflicting such restrictions and deprivations upon her own female students, as would be expected by society.[200] Yet, viewed in the context of her heterodox radical connections, and her initial open support of revolution in France and her opposition later on to war, Barbauld's responses appear, with some conjecture, to be those also of a woman more concerned simply with transcending issues of sex than defending them. If, as McCarthy suggests, Barbauld's reasons for rejecting the offer of teaching can also be applied to her rejection of Maria Edgeworth's invitation to write for a women's journal, as too the sentiments alluded to in 'The Rights of Woman', we might argue that distinctions of sex were simply not important when compared with issues of ideology and individual authenticity. This is something that Jane Rendall's research into working-class women would appear to corroborate.[201] 'There is no bond of union among literary women', wrote Barbauld to Edgeworth, 'any more than among literary men; different sentiments and different connections separate them much more than the joint interest of their sex would unite them'.[202] Just because two people happened to be female did not mean that their positions, interests, abilities and needs should conform. In this respect, Barbauld's thoughts might reflect something of a shared affinity with the ideas expressed by Godwin in *Political Justice* and certainly in his revised later editions, as will be discussed in chapter four. As this chapter and recent revisionist scholarship demonstrates, we

[199] Ibid., p.358.
[200] Ibid., p.360.
[201] For Rendall gender was not 'the primary factor determining women's loyalties and interests'; loyalty to class and community was more important. Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different*, p.4
[202] White, *Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, p.35. See also Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, pp.182-184.

need at times to think more critically about the context, the phrasing and the words used by radicals such as Barbauld and Wollstonecraft and indeed by evangelicals such as More.

Conclusion

In a bid to rid society of its arbitrary prejudices and gross generalisations regarding gender, heterodox radicals looked to gender-neutral curriculums, the coeducational environment and theories of emulation. 'Let the daily observation of mankind bear witness,' wrote Aikin, 'that no talent, no virtue, is masculine alone; no fault or folly exclusively feminine.'[203]

This chapter has examined the gender-neutral nature of heterodox radical classrooms, curriculums and textbooks. Exciting new scholarship on Barbauld and More helps to reveal not only the ways in which the educational theories of heterodox radicals and evangelicals overlapped but the often subtle, yet important, degree to which they also deviated from each other. Keen to promote the importance of the private sphere as the seat of moral knowledge and development, heterodox radicals such as the Godwins and the Aikin/Barbaulds sought to promote within their own homes and schools an egalitarian image of society. They did this by blurring the boundaries between the public and the private spheres. A more Socratic and thus inquisitive method of learning was encouraged in textbooks and classrooms where the boundaries between parent and child; teacher and student, man and woman were consciously blurred.

The heterodox radical concept of psychological androgyny and its influence upon education fed naturally into calls for reforms to marriage, as the one institution in whose power it was to either hamper or nurture the development of the unsexed mind. It is therefore to the radical debate on love and friendship and the calls for marital reform and the legalising of divorce that the following chapter turns.

[203] Aikin, *Epistles*, p.vi.

Chapter Four

Marriage and the Union of Androgynous Equals

> What is love, but the most venal of all venal commodities? What is marriage, but the most sordid of bargains, the most cold and slavish of all the forms of commerce? We want no philosophical ice-rock, towed into the Dead Sea of modern society, to freeze that which is too cold already. We want rather the torch of Prometheus to revivify our frozen spirits. We are a degenerate race, half-reasoning developments of the principle of infinite littleness, "with hearts in our bodies no bigger than pins' heads.[1]

Peacock spoke for many of his radical contemporaries when he likened the institution of marriage to the mere tip of a frigid and morally bankrupt society. Little more than a commercial transaction, accomplished for the purposes of wealth and social standing in the middling to upper-classes, this most 'slavish of all the forms of commerce' was nonetheless sanctified by a sacred and indissoluble vow. What, heterodox radicals wondered, had happened to the idea of marriage as a free and civil union between 'a most intimate friend and partner'? Having lost its purpose, not only as a source of mutual affection and support, but as a means to the 'well ordering of families, and right education of children',[2] the institution of marriage, just like that of education, had become the bearer of 'half-reasoning developments'. And with no legal and cheap recourse to the termination of a bad marriage, what hope was there for the perfectibility of the human mind?

While a number of important studies exist on marriage and this chapter draws upon many of them,[3] much of this work deals with changes to laws over the long-term, and despite studies

[1] Peacock, *Melincourt*, pp. 105-106.
[2] Israel Worsley, 'The Book of Common Prayer compiled for the use of the English Church at Dunkirk', in Rev. Peter Hall (ed.), *Fragmenta Liturgica*, vol. 7 (Bath, 1848), pp.77-79.
[3] Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1990); Lawrence Stone, *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992); Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009); Himmelfarb, *Marriage and Morals*; Ginger S. Frost, *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008); Davidoff

that examine the alternatives to marriage, and the influence of pioneers, so to speak, in free love unions, such as Ginger Frost's highly informative *Living in Sin*, the broad-brush approach has tended to dominate. While hugely important in marking shifts in law, practice and attitude over time, surveys of this kind can obscure the more idiosyncratic detail. Although the influence of Rational Dissent upon marital reform has been well-acknowledged in the historiography, the degree to which heterodox radicals departed even from Rational Dissenting criticism of marital laws and practices in England has been all but overlooked, subsumed, arguably, within the broader debate between Dissenting conscience and Anglican rule. Indeed, the rift within Dissenting communities and in particular amongst Unitarians would appear to have been at its greatest over the issues of marital reform and the consequences of such to the broader patriarchal issues of sexual excellence and hierarchy. Because of this, the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny present in the objections voiced by increasingly marginalised heterodox radicals has been all but overlooked.

The previous chapter investigated how the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny helped to inform radical changes to elementary education, underpinning the development of noticeably gender-neutral curriculums and coeducational spaces that mixed elements of the principles of public and private so that the sexes might be brought to a greater conformity of mind and habit. However, for changes in education to have any marked effect, concomitant reforms to the institution of marriage were needed as well. With the help of the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer* and the revised Unitarian prayer book, alongside articles published in the *Monthly Repository* and parliamentary debates, this chapter will reveal the key and all but overlooked points of divergence between heterodox radicals and their

& Hall, *Family Fortunes*; John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988); Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*; James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987).

increasingly conservative and patriarchal Rational Dissenting peers. What is so often described in the historiography as a Dissenting 'marriage question' will, through consideration of the concept of the unsexed mind, be viewed as a question that while uniting the broader and increasingly conservative Dissenting community – Trinitarians and Unitarians alike - acted to reveal the ideological divisions that forced the more heterodox and increasingly secularist fringes of Rational Dissent further onto the margins. It is such considerations that in many respects transform the 'marriage question' between the late eighteenth century and the enacting of the Marriage Act in 1836, into one fuelled by seemingly irresolvable differences between those – Anglicans and Dissenters - who supported the principles of patriarchy, and heterodox radicals who wished, in principle at least, for a more egalitarian system of existence and governance.

The 'marriage question' has exercised the minds of men and women for centuries, with the merits of friendship and conjugal affection variously waxing and waning. Concerns over the legitimacy of the sacred rites of marriage, however, would appear to have emerged in England with force from the mid-seventeenth century.[4] Challenges to the solemn legitimacy of marriage developed out of the upheavals of Civil War and the Interregnum and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which reduced the once divine seat of monarchy to that of titular head and in doing so challenged the legitimacy of patriarchy. The state, Locke argued, was a human construct, created by way of an original contract between men. Men were born equal and with equal rights, yet as part of this original contract power was entrusted by the people to governors and magistrates for the protection of their civil rights and liberties. If, however, those in whom power had been entrusted were to renege on this solemn vow, it was perfectly within the rights of the people to resist or replace them.[5] By gainsaying the divine

[4] See Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, p.14.
[5] See Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*, p.40; J.R. Milton, 'Locke, John (1632-1704)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 04/09/2018.

sanction of monarchy, critics such as Locke lay siege also to the legitimacy of the sacred and solemn vow of matrimony.[6]

As Sean Gill argues, the breakdown of political authority in the state during the Civil War was accompanied by a 'parallel attack on patriarchal power within the family – both fuelled by an appeal to dangerous notions of radical religious equality and the power of the spirit to transcend mere human conventions'.[7] Quakers erased references to obedience from their marriage ceremony and for a short while during the Interregnum, a civil marriage statute was passed.[8] The restoration of the monarchy in 1660, however, brought with it a restoration of Anglican orthodoxies and the repeal of the civil marriage statute. Yet, it would be wrong to suggest that the Interregnum had broken with all previous orthodoxies and that the return of monarchy witnessed the concomitant return of conservative and reactionary policies and principles. Despite evidence of egalitarian practices amongst a small number of Puritans and Quakers, the vast majority of Dissenting critiques on marriage during this period, as John Gillis points out, were supportive of patriarchy and thus the hierarchy of sexual difference.[9]

It is the objective of this chapter to explore how heterodox radicals sought to remove the religious and cultural impediments to freedom and equality within marriage. They sought to achieve this not only by challenging the sacred legitimacy of marriage but by insisting that the sexual-double standard be removed from all aspects of the marital contract and most especially from the marriage ceremony itself**.**

I wish to start, however, by addressing some recent and extremely insightful revisions to the history of marriage in England immediately before and during the Romantic era. Revisions in

[6] See John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government* (London, Whitmore and Fenn, 1821), pp.253-257.
[7] Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1994), p.13.
[8] Frost, *Living in Sin*, p.170.
[9] Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp.100-105.

this area have a direct bearing on our appreciation of the significance of the proposals sought by heterodox radicals.

Marriage in England

The introduction in 1753 of the 'Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage' or the Hardwicke Act as it was popularly known, occupies a pivotal and dominant position in histories of marriage and divorce. Scholars invariably mark the Act as a 'watershed in the history of the legal regulation of marriage'[10] and the beginning of increasing opposition to and dissent from the marital institution itself.[11] Rebecca Probert's recent and most convincing reassessment of matrimonial practices during the long eighteenth century paints a quite different picture, however. Probert takes issue with the common historiographical assumption that the Hardwicke Act was deeply unpopular and that it 'fundamentally altered the very meaning of marriage for the participants, transforming [it] from a private and meaningful rite to a bureaucratic transaction'.[12] Probert maintains that insufficient evidence exists to support the argument. The main reason for the discrepancy is to be found in a fundamental misinterpretation not only of the contemporary understanding of 'clandestine' but of the actual laws and practices of marriage prior to 1753. Far from being unpopular or forsaken, Probert argues that marriage in the Church of England was 'the accepted and (outside of London) almost universal mode of marrying…' She rejects also the common assumption that the marriage system prior to 1753 was in a state of 'chaos' and disarray, consisting of a number of methods, regular and irregular.[13] The overwhelming majority of the population appear to have conformed to the rules of orthodox and Anglican matrimony, with 'virtually all Protestant Dissenters, most Catholics, and even some Quakers' marrying without protest

[10] Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, p.2.
[11] Stone, *Road to Divorce*; Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*; Eve Tavor Bannet, 'The Marriage Act of 1753: "A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex"', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no.3 (Spring, 1997), pp.233-254.
[12] Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, p.3. See L. O'Connell, 'Marriage Acts: Stages in the Transformation of Modern Nuptial Culture', *Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 68 (1999), p.86.
[13] Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, pp. 340-341.

and according to the rites of the Church of England.[14] Probert further highlights an extremely important and often misunderstood aspect of the 1753 Act, namely that it did not state that a marriage celebrated without the customary rites or 'solemnity' - that is following the exact form of the *Book of Common Prayer* - would be rendered void.[15] Although perhaps frowned upon, it was still acceptable, and not unknown, for some Dissenting men and women to race through or deliberately omit key words and phrases in their responses during the wedding ceremony.[16] This should not, however, be deemed irrefutable evidence of either a broad rejection or dissatisfaction with marital law and practices at this time, nor should it be suggested that notions of hierarchy and obedience underpinned by the ceremony, were not held sacred by the vast majority of men and women alike. For Probert, the 1753 Act was not only 'almost universally observed', it was neither a 'radical break with the past', nor was it subject to 'harsh interpretation by the courts'.[17]

Rather than evidence of broad-based opposition, according to Probert, the issue of marital reform, prior to 1832, was guided largely by the ideological concerns of Unitarians who cited particular objection to references to the Trinity. Unitarians played a key and, at first, solitary role in the campaign for marital reform from the 1780s. It was only with the emergence of Unitarians as a separate Dissenting denomination in the 1780s that further applications for relief from the Anglican marriage ceremony were made. Other than the initial exemptions for Quakers and Jews, no other Dissenting groups prior to this had sought relief, suggesting that they felt little need to do so.

Yet, the overarching objection for heterodox radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent would appear to have rested less upon matters of doctrine and more with the principles of human liberty and equality. Although in evidence from the 1790s, heterodox opinions on

[14] Ibid., pp. 332-333.
[15] Ibid., pp.56-57.
[16] see Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp.151-152.
[17] Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, p.5.

marriage would become increasingly noticeable after 1813[18] and in particular on the lead up to the Great Reform Act of 1832 and immediately after. That this trend was apparent to those outside the denomination can be seen by comments made before the House of Commons in 1825 by the MP Dr Lushington who observed that 'some bodies of dissenters [were] adverse to the solemnization of the marriage ceremony by any clergyman at all.' Altering the marriage ceremony to reflect religious conscience where no such conscience was felt would, he argued, achieve little.[19] For heterodox radicals, it mattered little if the actual ceremony attending the union of two people was religious or not, the main issue was over the arbitrary control of human liberty and individual expression. Despite differing opinions on the proper nature and function of marriage or heterosexual union, with Owen adopting a more collective and less individualistic approach to the institution, for heterodox radicals generally, from Godwin through to Owen, the matrimonial ceremony and all it stood for was not, as Fox would explain, a 'dissenting grievance, but one of the great evils of the social state'.[20] Writing in 1835, two years after Fox, Owen would go so far as to describe the institution as inflicting, 'morally and physically, the direst calamities upon the whole of the human race'.[21]

For Godwin, marriage was nothing more than 'an affair of property, and the worst of all properties.'[22] Marriage, in both its common and religious forms amounted, for Godwin, to little more than the medieval and feudal buying and selling of goods and chattels. As the radical Unitarian minister, Israel Worsley (1768-1836) would point out in 1816, marriage had only been made a sacred ceremony by Pope Innocent III in 1215, who laid out its official

[18] The Doctrine of the Trinity Act in 1813 granted toleration to Unitarian worship. See Israel Worsley, 'Mr Worsley on the Marriage Ceremony', *Monthly Repository* (April 1816), pp.208-212. After 1813, debate on matters of civil legitimacy increased amongst heterodox radicals such as Worsley and Fox. The 'Old Unitarian' noticed this, arguing in 1817 that 'a new class of Unitarians has arisen whose gratitude for [the] boon [of toleration]…is less than problematical, and to whom the repeal in question has proved very little acceptable'. See 'An Old Unitarian', p.285.

[19] 'Dissenters' Marriages Bill', *Hansard* (March 25, 1825), 1241.

[20] Fox, 'The Dissenting Marriage Question', *Monthly Repository* (January 1833), p.139. For Owen's views on marriage, see J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: The Quest for a New Moral World* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.59-62.

[21] Robert Owen, 'Marriage', *New Moral World* (Saturday, February 7, 1835), p.113.

[22] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), pp.849-852.

procedure and meaning in Canon 51 of the Fourth Lateran Council.[23] Before this, marriage was a civil contract. With the civil nature of marriage obscured, the perfunctory and commercial exchange of goods and chattels noticed in common law principles of coverture were made suddenly sacred and indissoluble by a divine and solemn exchange of vows.

Thompson and Wheeler's *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race* offered a scathing attack on the institution and upon James Mill's utilitarian argument that women's interests were naturally subsumed within those of their husbands'. As part of the competition for wealth and property, women were routinely reduced to 'domestic slavery, without will of their own'.[24] As the radical polemicist, poet and wood-engraver, William Linton (1812-1897) argued in 1839, marriage gave:

> one human being a legal right over the person and property of another human being (which legal right is assumed to be moral and virtuous); changing the nature of love from an affection highly sympathetic, into a most selfish one. "I give all" is altered into "I will have all", when each has become bound by solemn promises. This evil falls on both sexes, but most severely on women.[25]

Writing in 1835 in the *New Moral World*, Owen accused the institution of giving the human race a 'totally different character…from that which it might have acquired provided the association of the sexes had been in accordance with the natural laws of our organisation'. Comparing the true 'chastity of Nature' with the '*spurious* chastity of the *church and law*', in language imbued with a Platonic and Shelleyan sensibility, Owen argued that real chastity consisted in:

> the intercourse of the sexes when there is a pure and genuine sympathy or sincere affection between the parties; when the physical, intellectual, and moral feelings of the

[23] Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450-1500* (London, Phoenix Giant, 1995), pp.106-107.
[24] Thompson and Wheeler, *Appeal*, p.83.
[25] William Linton, 'Effects of Legislating upon Love', *The National: A Library for the People* (London, 1938), p.325.

> one are in perfect accordance with those of the other; when in fact, their natures are so happily blended that together they form but one harmonious whole, and become, when thus united in heart and soul, or body and mind, one being, whose feelings and interests are identified, and who are thus made capable of enjoying these sympathies and affections so long as Nature has designed them to remain, and thus to experience the full happiness of their nature, or of a virtuous mode of existence.[26]

There is nothing unequal, hierarchical or hermaphroditical in Owen's description of perfect union – unlike the biblical union of 'one flesh' criticised by heterodox radicals as profoundly unequal. Nor is there any sense that the natural tie would be any more promiscuous than the unnatural tie. Yet, far from encouraging the harmonious and androgynous union of two people, Linton bemoaned how the institution of marriage, created, 'an opposition of aims instead of confirming the natural identity of [men and women's] interests.'[27] Linton's comments were no doubt encouraged by his own experiences. Linton's first wife, Laura, had died of consumption very early in their marriage but the laws against marriage to the siblings of spouses meant that when Linton started to live with Laura's sister, Emily, in 1839, they were not able to marry. The seven children she bore Linton were illegitimate.[28] The hypocrisy that forbade two people who had fallen out of love to divorce, but equally forbade two people who had fallen in love to marry, thus forcing couples in both instances into unbearable and often unlawful situations, was very much in mind. Thus, for heterodox radicals, marriage forced men and women, segregated in almost everything from birth, into indissoluble unions of often suffocating and incompatible 'oneness'.

The Hermaphroditical 'Shackles' of Spousal Unity

For heterodox radicals, the laws of matrimony in England forced a couple to renounce their individual identities in a show of spousal unity, which meant that before Christ and his

[26] Robert Owen, 'Marriage', pp.113-1114.
[27] William Linton, 'The Rights of Woman', *The National: A Library for the People* (London, 1839), pp.138-139.
[28] John Murdoch, 'Linton, William James (1812-1897)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 04/09/2018.

Church, as sexual and complementary opposites, man and woman were made 'one flesh'.[29] The doctrine of spousal unity found in the second chapter of Genesis taught that a man was to 'leave his father and his mother, and…cleave unto his wife', making them one.[30] This seemingly androgynous notion, however, was not based on equality between the sexes – something endorsed in the heterodox and Platonised concept - but upon the subordination of one sex to the other. As they became one flesh in the eyes of God; in the eyes of the law, the woman's identity and rights were subsumed within those of her husband. The collective identity of female 'helpmeet' was subsumed within the collective identity of 'master' and 'protector'. But as Beard would point out in 1857, the term 'meet' as in 'helpmate' did not 'exactly suit the original, which is less imperfectly Englished [sic] by "corresponding"'.[31] The term 'corresponding' suggested equality. The reality was quite different.

Rather than androgynous, we might describe the doctrine of spousal unity as hermaphroditical. Wollstonecraft's analogy of the 'graceful ivy clasping the oak that supported it' captures the traditional image of nuptial 'fusion' perfectly and though a reference to the common notion of man as 'lofty pine' and of woman as 'slender vine',[32] would appear also to invoke the image of Ovid's Hermaphroditus.[33] As Wollstonecraft pointed out, this was certainly not what Plato had meant when he asserted that 'human love led to heavenly, and was only an exaltation of the same affection', and that it must therefore 'be love of perfection, and not compassion for weakness'.[34] Coleridge would say something remarkably similar when he wrote that Plato said, 'that in this way we rise from sensuality to affection, from affection to love, and from love to the pure intellectual delight by which we

[29] *The Book of Common Prayer* (London, Everyman's Library, 1999), p.299.
[30] Genesis ii, 22-24.
[31] John Relly Beard, *A Revised English Bible: The Want of the Church and the Demand of the Age* (London, E.T. Whitfield, 1857), p.237.
[32] See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p.179.
[33] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.87; See reprinting of Ovid's tale of Hermaphroditus in Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, p.48.
[34] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.46.

become worthy to conceive that infinite in ourselves'.[35] Both would seem to acknowledge the presence and importance of androgyny. As Taylor argues, Coleridge used the term *hemiplegia* to describe couples who, unable to grow together or as individuals within marriage, lived a sort of half-life: 'self-mutilated, self-paralysed'.[36] Again, comparisons can be made between Coleridge's description of a 'half-life' and Ovid's tale of enervated masculinity in that the hermaphrodite is no longer two beings, one male and one female, but 'neither, and yet both'.[37] Writing in 1835, the radical writer and social reformer, Mary Leman Grimstone (1796-1869), would appear to invoke implicitly the image of the marital hermaphrodite when she asked that women 'not cling from a principle of mercenary dependence, growing out of a man's monopoly of the means of existence; nor from a faith in the presumptuous axiom, that woman was made for man - *not more than he was made for her*'.[38] The subsuming of one within the other cheats both partners of their individuality and opportunity to achieve wholeness. Though appearing to mirror in many ways the image of harmonious entwining, the androgyny presented by evangelicals such as More was based on complementarity of sexual character and thus, for heterodox radicals, upon a prescribed and 'fanciful kind of *half* being - one of Rousseau's wild chimeras', to use Wollstonecraft's description.[39] 'Man was made to reason, woman to feel', wrote Wollstonecraft with sarcasm and frustration, 'and that together, flesh and spirit, they make the most perfect whole, by blending happily reason and sensibility into one character'.[40] The image presented is in many respects of a society enervated and effeminised through a form of social and psycho-sexual hermaphroditism. Writing of Coleridge's distress over his ill-matched marriage, Anya Taylor describes how the 'oneness

[35] Coleridge, 'Lectures on Literature 1808-1819', vol. 2, p.499.
[36] See Anya Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge: Women, Love, and the Law against Divorce* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p.177; Coleridge, 'No. 3, Thursday, August 10, 1809' *Friend*, p.38; 'Unknown Correspondent 1268, June 1821', *Collected Letters*, vol. 4, p.42.
[37] See Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, p.48.
[38] Mary Leman Grimstone, 'Female Education', *New Moral World* (February 7th, 1835), p.134.
[39] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.115. For a description of the evangelical image of marital harmony see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp.178-179.
[40] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', pp.134-135.

enforced by marriage, the obliteration of one person within another,' was completely different from that true love which bound identities together.[41] Writing in his highly controversial tract on the principles of birth control, *Every Woman's Book: or, What is Love?* (1826), Carlile, maintained that spousal unity not only created an indissoluble and artificial union, that generated 'enmity', but a union that forced two sexes who were in 'almost every respect alike', into a fundamentally unequal union.[42]

How could marriage ever become a bastion of progress from which following generations would, as Fox hoped, 'advance on the mental and moral attainments of the present,' when as part of the vow to remain together 'till death us do part' was joined for women by a vow of obedience? Where the man was expected to love, comfort, honour and keep, the woman was expected to do all of these and to serve and obey.[43] If, as heterodox radicals believed, men and women were in 'almost every respect alike', where was the propriety in forcing one half to a vow of life-long obedience? It is on the issue of obedience that perhaps the greatest difference emerges between heterodox radicals and their more orthodox Rational Dissenting peers.

The Eradication of 'Obedience' from the Marriage Ceremony

Aside from a brief mention by R.K. Webb in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Israel Worsley, seems largely forgotten in the historiography. Yet, in so far as the matter of obedience was concerned, Worsley can be said to have played a vital role. Worsley's removal of obedience from the matrimonial ceremony and its significance in regard to notions of equality has been all but overlooked.

In 1790 a committee of merchants living in Dunkirk invited Worsley to be their first minister. It is not known whether this newly-established congregation was entirely non-conformist, but

[41] Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge*, p.178.
[42] Richard Carlile, *Every Woman's Book: or, What is Love?* (London, 1826), pp.12-17.
[43] *Book of Common Prayer*, p.301.

evidence suggests that it comprised a mixture of protestant denominations. According to Worsley, the intention was to design an ecumenical mode of public worship and prayer that would not offend any conscience.[44] Worsley brought with him a revised copy of the already reformed Unitarian Prayer Book. While the matrimonial ceremony in the reformed prayer book omitted all references to the Trinity, it observed the vow of obedience found in the original Anglican Prayer Book.[45] Worsley's revised edition omitted the vow of obedience entirely and in doing so would seem to erase all hierarchical distinctions between the married couple. Instead of the woman being asked to 'obey' and 'serve', both parties were asked to love, comfort, honour and keep one another.[46] The lack of distinction between the two raises another interesting point: when directed at both parties, the use of 'keep' might imply the sharing of the financial load. It would have been interesting to follow the marriage ceremony between Wollstonecraft and Godwin. Both parties were treated as equals in the fullest sense of the word, and 'obey' and any implicit reference to it were completely absent. The eradication of sexual distinction surely is significant. And although in the preface to the Dunkirk prayer book, Worsley pointed to the necessities of convenience and compromise in establishing an ecumenical church,[47] it is difficult not to feel that there was more to Worsley's omission than a liturgical compromise.

In all the articles published in the *Monthly Repository* on the 'marriage question' between 1812 and 1836, when Fox relinquished control of the journal, only two, by Worsley and Fox himself, raised the issue of obedience and equality in marriage.[48] Obedience, it would seem, was not an issue that concerned the majority of Unitarians, as their reformed prayer book

[44] Worsley, 'The Book of Common Prayer', pp.3-5.
[45] Theophilus Lindsey, *The Book of Common Prayer Reformed According to the Plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke*, 2nd edition (London, J. Johnson, December, 1774), pp.82-83. The matrimonial ceremony was added in this second edition.
[46] Worsley, 'The Book of Common Prayer', pp.72-73.
[47] Ibid., pp.3-4.
[48] Worsley, 'On the Marriage Ceremony', p.212; Fox, 'Dissenting Marriage Question', p.141. Fox refers to the Quaker matrimonial ceremony notable for the omission of female obedience. Though abstaining from defining the 'legal rights of wifehood', Fox's reference to female subordination is significant.

would imply. As Worsley highlighted in his article, the main bone of contention and concern amongst 'that class of religious professors by whom these pages will be read, is, the name in which this engagement is entered into, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"'.[49] If matters of principle guided the objection to references to the Trinity, no such qualms would appear to have been voiced by the majority over the matter of 'serve and obey'.[50] As Lawrence Stone observes, even amongst the generality of Unitarians, the vow of obedience was just part of a 'set of internalized values', engendered by religion and education that taught that it was God's will that women be subservient to men.[51] Much of Wollstonecraft's frustration with her own sex might be attributed to this unquestioning belief in divine authority. It is impossible to tell how far if at all knowledge of this revised ceremony travelled amongst Unitarian congregations in England. However, Worsley's example was not entirely isolated.

Upon the retirement of the first Unitarian minister and theologian, Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808)[52] in 1793, John Disney, who was married to Mrs Lindsey's stepsister, took over as sole minister of the Essex Street chapel in London, which, according to R.K. Webb was known as the 'most fashionable of the Unitarian chapels in the capital'.[53] A year before Lindsey's retirement, Disney made a minor revision to the Unitarian prayer book.[54] I can find no evidence to suggest that Disney or Worsley ever met but owing to the close links between Unitarians, it seems a little too coincidental that only one year after the Dunkirk prayer book was published, Disney should make a remarkably similar change. While Disney did not omit

[49] Worsley, 'On the Marriage Ceremony', p. 212.
[50] See 'Dissenters' Marriages', *Monthly Repository* (April 1827), p.299; 'Marriage Protest', *Monthly Repository* (November 1831), p.794.
[51] Stone, *The Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987*, p.2.
[52] Albert Nicholson, revised by G.M. Ditchfield, 'Lindsey, Theophilus (1723-1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 09/09/2018. Lindsey resigned as an Anglican vicar in 1773, setting up the first Unitarian congregation in Essex Street London in 1774.
[53] R.K. Webb, 'Belsham, Thomas (1750-1829)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 05/09/2018.
[54] Alexander Gordon, 'Disney, John (1746-1816)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online: 10/07/2015.

the sexual double standard entirely, there was a noticeable softening of the command. Where the man was asked to love, comfort, honour and provide; the woman was asked to love, comfort, honour and assist.[55] Though still maintaining the role of woman as 'helpmeet', the word 'assist' suggests a far greater degree of freedom and personal choice, with the option to withdraw assistance should the woman so wish. Disney made one further and obvious revision. The title of the revised prayer book was altered from the *Book of Common Prayer Reformed According to the Plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke*, to the *Book of Common Prayer Reformed for the use of Unitarian Congregations*. We can only assume that Lindsey either accepted the unofficial alterations or was simply not aware of them. Either way, Joseph Johnson, as a member of this heterodox group, seems to have been more than happy to print and publish the revised prayer book. I do not know why Disney made the changes he did or whether he paid for the print run himself, hoping perhaps to avoid notice. To print a new prayer book with one minor change to the matrimonial ceremony might seem rather extreme, unless that change meant something. Although a third official edition was printed a matter of months later in January 1793, Disney and his unofficial prayer book remained at the Essex Street chapel, without fuss, it would seem, for twelve years. In the advertisement to his revised prayer book, Disney acknowledged that he did not know 'how far the alterations, now introduced into it, deserve to be retained or rejected, in part, or in the whole', but that it was a question which belonged 'not to the editor to determine'.[56] It would be interesting to know how many women in that time married without the usual pledge to serve and obey. However, on Disney's resignation in 1805 – due, we are told, to a bequest of property and ill health – the congregation, now under the ministerial care of Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), reverted immediately to the official version, which of course included the words 'serve' and 'obey'.[57]

[55] John Disney, *The Book of Common Prayer Reformed for the use of Unitarian Congregations* (London, J. Johnson, 1792), pp.79-80.
[56] Ibid., p.v.
[57] Gordon, 'Disney, John (1746-1816)'.

Interestingly, Belsham was hailed by the 'Old Unitarian' as one of the faithful 'old brigade'.[58] Immediately upon replacing Disney, Belsham had a fifth edition of the official reformed prayer book printed in 1805. In it he included advertisements for the previous four editions: April 1774, December 1774, September 1785 and January 1793. There is nothing unusual in this, except for the fact that Disney's edition of June 1792 is absent, perhaps understandably.[59] That Disney's change to the matrimonial ceremony was not sanctioned by official arbiters might be read in Belsham's advertisement to the fifth edition: 'The few variations which have been made in the Liturgy, and which are chiefly Verbal, have been sanctioned with the full approbation and concurrence of the revered Editor of the former impressions of this work, and of many other very respectable and judicious persons to whom they have been shown'.[60] Disney's indirect dressing down might be noted.

What the above serves to demonstrate is that the issue of female obedience within Rational Dissent would appear very much to have been a marginal and heterodox radical concern. It is interesting, that Coleridge, who for a short while in early 1798 had taken up the position of Unitarian minister at Shrewsbury, prior to accepting the annuity from the Wedgwoods and travelling to Göttingen,[61] should advise a young lady in 1822 to be absolutely sure of a potential match before she committed at the altar to 'love, honour and *respect*'.[62] Although Coleridge's opinions on marriage might appear at times decidedly conservative, to choose 'respect' over 'obey' might appear significant. There are notable parallels between this and Wollstonecraft's advice in *Rights of Men*, with which Coleridge was no doubt familiar, that 'affection in the marriage state…[could]…only be founded on respect...[for]…we cannot

[58] See, 'An Old Unitarian', p.285. Belsham's interest in German historical criticism did not stretch to German theology or Kant's critical philosophy; he found both impenetrable. See Webb, 'Belsham, Thomas (1750-1829)'.
[59] *The Book of Common Prayer Reformed According to the Plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke*, ed. by Thomas Belsham, 5th edition (London, J. Johnson, 1805).
[60] 'Advertisement', *Book of Common Prayer Reformed* (1805).
[61] See White, *Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, p.120.
[62] Coleridge, *Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary: to Which is added The Theory of Life* (London, G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1911), p.230. Italics my own.

serve two masters?'[63] The use of 'respect' in place of 'obey' and 'serve' implies a more equal relationship. To respect someone is to be aware of their qualities as an individual. Coleridge may have had in mind his own marriage in which respect on both sides would appear to have been decidedly lacking. And although 'respect' could still be used to denote the superiority of one partner over the other, there is a distinct difference between a relationship based upon what Thompson and Wheeler termed 'uninquiring obedience'[64] and one based upon the independent knowledge of a partner's character and worth. Respect, as they say, has to be earned. And as Thompson and Wheeler pointed out, equality was founded on the respect felt and earned by both partners.[65] There is no such reciprocity in a vow of obedience. For Wollstonecraft, certainly, there was a clear distinction between 'respect' and 'obedience'.

As tiny as the revisions made by Worsley, Disney and indeed Coleridge might seem they were in many respects extremely radical. To reject the principle of obedience within marriage was not only to reject the principle of hierarchy and the importance of the 'domestic sovereign'[66] it was in many ways tantamount to rejecting the principle of obedience to the State. The omission of obedience from the marriage service was a significant and one might say logical extension to Locke's original principle of resistance: this time, however, the 'people' included women as well. As Bannet explains, the family for all represented the 'origin of society and society's most fundamental component unit, and that there was therefore continuity, as well as analogy, between the private and the public good, and between the ordering of private families and the peace, prosperity, and well-being of the state', as the matrimonial ceremonies of Worsley and Disney both maintained and

[63] Wollstonecraft, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Men', in Todd (ed.), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and a Vindication of the Rights of* Men, p.22.
[64] Thompson and Wheeler, *Appeal*, p.194.
[65] Ibid., pp.196-197.
[66] Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*, p.8.

emphasised. There was no alteration to this final aspect of the official Unitarian matrimonial ceremony which stated that, 'the other great end of marriage is for the well ordering of families, and right education of children'. The official Unitarian prayer book struck a more secular and modern tone, exhorting newly-weds to appreciate the importance of friendship and support, emphasising the role of friendship and support,[67] sentiments lacking from the far more prescriptive and austere 'duties' set out in the Anglican version. It can be argued that the complete omission of obedience from Worsley's and Disney's editions rendered the revisions in the official Unitarian prayer book all the more radical and progressive.

Possibly as a defensive sally against all those who would advise otherwise, in 1808, the popular magazine, *La Belle Assemblé*, urged its female subscribers to 'read frequently and with close attention the matrimonial service, and take care in doing it not to overlook the word OBEY'.[68]

Spousal Unity and the Influence of Locke and Milton

The influence of a revivified Platonism, as well as advances in biblical and classical analysis and in the human and natural sciences that were coming out of the German states, might be said to have pushed the heterodox radical debate on psycho-sexual equality beyond that proposed by the liberal yet patriarchal ideas of Locke, Priestley and of course the great poet, John Milton (1608-1674).[69] Locke in particular, as R.S. White explains, left the traditional family intact as 'a structure which [was] built on patriarchal power.'[70] While this anomaly in Locke's theories was evidently of little concern amongst older Unitarians such as Priestley, it was not sympathetic to the egalitarian theories promoted by heterodox radicals.

[67] See *The Book of Common Prayer Reformed According to the Plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke*, 2nd ed. (London, J. Johnson, 1775), pp.124-129.
[68] *La Belle Assemble*, no. 4 (London, 1808), p.82.
[69] Gill, *Women and the Church of England*, pp.11-12.
[70] R.S. White, *Natural Rights and the Birth of Romanticism in the 1790s* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.81.

Again, appreciating the differences between Rational Dissent and its heterodox radical fringe is important. Despite rejecting arguments for Eve's inferiority in biblical and domestic terms, Locke still accepted woman's general subjection. Her physical inferiority and her necessary retirement for purposes of labour and child-rearing made women's proper sphere a private and subordinate one. As Melissa Butler argues, liberal theorists may have 'stripped Genesis of its political import…[but] the social implications of Genesis were not completely rejected…' Mankind was born free and thus the 'biblical basis for political subordination' was rejected but physical evidence was used as proof of woman's natural subordinate status and general unfitness for public and political life.[71] As Butler points out, Locke's principal interest and that of other liberal contract theorists was to refute the 'idea of a divine grant of authority to Adam,' and thus the divine grant of hereditary authority to the monarch, thereby emphasising the role of the social contract between monarch and subject and thus justifying the right to resistance.[72] Locke had little intention of extending this argument in its entirety to women. Although believing that women were free to overcome their natural limitations and despite rejecting the notion that the husband had absolute power over his wife in 'common interests and property', Locke maintained that men and women had 'different understandings'.[73] As Butler observes, Locke lived in a world in which the subjection of women was an empirical fact and he was willing to yield to the contemporary view that this fact had 'some foundation in nature.'[74] 'Though [men and women] have but one common concern,' Locke wrote, 'yet having different understandings, will unavoidably sometimes have different wills too; it therefore being necessary that the last determination, i.e. the rule, should be placed somewhere; it naturally falls to the man's share, as the abler and the

[71] Melissa Butler, 'Early Liberal Roots of Feminism: John Locke and the Attack on Patriarchy', *American Political Science Review* 72 (1978), pp.141-142.
[72] Ibid., p.142.
[73] Ibid., p.145.
[74] Ibid., p.143.

stronger.[75] Priestley would assert something remarkably similar when he suggested that in all other things men and women were 'considered and treated as perfectly equal,' the man having no advantage 'besides that superiority which must be given to one of them.'[76] Milton too, despite his radical thoughts on marriage and divorce, believed there to be a fundamental and natural inequality between men and women that stemmed from the original biblical union. This belief was expressed clearly in his epic and hugely influential poem, *Paradise Lost* (1667).

Even where the authenticity of Genesis was questioned by those such as Locke and Priestley, the belief in the existence of divine expediency discerned within the 'myth' could be relied upon to support the essential patriarchal character and structure of human society and marriage, while at the same time endorsing the belief that, spiritually, men and women were equal: 'How much more consonant to reason is the doctrine of our Scriptures concerning the two sexes!' Priestley proclaimed. 'According to them, the man has no advantage besides that superiority which must be given to one of them'. Priestley highlighted the same moral duties and the same 'future reward' in which for both sexes there would be 'no marrying or giving in marriage, but all will be alike, as the angels of God in heaven'.[77] Much like Priestley, the theologian and moralist, William Paley (1743-1805), argued that God made Adam master of Eve to avoid the 'competitions which equality, or a contested superiority is almost sure to produce.'[78] Such theories only served to highlight the circular arguments that many fell into when trying to explain the contradictions in the story of creation. According to Gill, conservatives and evangelicals looked to Milton's interpretation of Genesis in *Paradise Lost*

[75] Locke, *Two Treatise of Government*, pp.256-257.
[76] Priestley, *Theological and Miscellaneous Works*, p.230. In a study of Samuel Johnson's sexual politics, a similar patriarchal interpretation of androgyny is observed. Men and women were equal spiritually but a wife's duty of obedience was 'indispensable'. See Kathleen Nulton Kemmerer, *A Neutral Being Between the Sexes: Samuel Johnson's Sexual Politics* (London, Associated University Press, 1998), pp.25-26.
[77] Priestley, *Theological and Miscellaneous Works*, vol. xvii, p.230.
[78] Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, p.279.

for examples of Eve's reverence for Adam, and of her willing annihilation and absorption.[79] For all their great admiration of Milton, heterodox radicals in contrast viewed the seventeenth-century poet's picture of Edenic subordination as an example of how the myth of Genesis might be used to furnish a distorted and patriarchal image of mankind. Arguments for 'expediency', endorsed by those such as Milton, Priestley and Paley, hinged on a gendered interpretation of 'equality'.

Christian patriarchy, according to Sean Gill, hinged upon the interpretation of 'God's pre-lapsarian ordering of the cosmos'.[80] As examined in chapters one and two, arguments for and against the sexual double standard rested upon subtle interpretations of the original cosmological androgyne and of Eve's relationship to Adam. For those in favour of an egalitarian interpretation, if an androgynous Adam was made in the image of God then there could be no divine precedence for sexual hierarchy.[81] Described by some as directing his hopes 'exclusively to men',[82] in *Rights of Man* (1791) the revolutionary Thomas Paine (1737-1809) referred his readers to the Mosaic account of Creation, arguing that all references to 'Man' should be understood to mean, '*the unity or equality of man*:

> The expressions admit of no controversy. 'And God said, Let us make man in our own image. In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.' The distinction of sexes is pointed out, but no other distinction is even implied. If this be no divine authority, it is at least historical authority, and shows that the equality of man, so far from being a modern doctrine, is the oldest upon record.[83]

Unlike Locke and Priestley, Paine did not argue that 'nature' and indeed social order necessitated a sexual hierarchy. As a noted member of this network of heterodox radicals,

[79] Gill, *Women and the Church of England*, p.17.
[80] Ibid., pp.15-16.
[81] For an interpretation of a non-partial God, see Aikin, *Epistles*, p.12.
[82] Arianne Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism* (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2010), p.110.
[83] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (New York, Dover Publications, 1999), p.29.

Paine's allusion to sexual equality as 'historical' is surely instructive, suggesting that sexual difference was in large part a social construct.

In their many works on educational and marital reform, heterodox radicals engaged directly with the debate on Genesis, highlighting its many arbitrary contradictions. Reflecting broader Anglo-German debate on 'mythi', arguments by those such as Wollstonecraft focused on the human construction of the 'poetical story' of Genesis and the discrepancy between the first and second chapters: to the androgynous 'man' in the first and the distinctly male Adam in the second.[84] For some, Milton's *Paradise Lost* was a good example of the patriarchal bias in orthodox understanding of Adam and the creation of Eve and of the ordained subordination of woman. In *Rights of Woman* Wollstonecraft noted:

> To whom thus Eve with *perfect beauty* adorn'd.
> My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
> *Unargued* I obey; so God ordains;
> God is *thy law, thou mine*: to know no more
> Is Woman's *happiest* knowledge and her *praise*. [85]

Where Adam was made in God's image, Eve had been made of Adam, and thus her connection to God - and that of all women thereafter - was virtual and vicarious.

Eighteen years later, in *Epistles*, Aikin would say something remarkably similar. Aikin reprimanded the 'great Milton' for the 'blasphemous presumption' that made 'his Eve address to Adam the acknowledgement, "God is thy head, thou mine;" and in the assertion that the first human pair were formed, "He for God only, she for God in him"'.[86] Referring to the 'new-born pair', Aikin described the love refined by a 'kindred mind' and rejected wholeheartedly the notion that God had made woman for man:

[84] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.92.
[85] Ibid., p.85.
[86] Aikin, *Epistles*, pp.v-vii.

> Nor deem that He, beneficent and just,
>
> In woman's hand who lodged this sacred trust,
>
> For man alone her conscious soul informed,
>
> For man alone her tenderer bosom warmed;
>
> Born but to serve, existing but to please….

'No', Aikin asserted, Adam and Eve had walked hand in hand, 'alike the children of no partial God;/*Equal* they trod…'[87] As Aikin knew only too well, Milton's 'Adam' reflected orthodox belief. Writing a year later in the *Courier* on the whipping of women in public for petty crimes, Coleridge would assert something very similar, insisting that man *and* woman were made in God's image:

> Never let it be forgotten, that every human being bears in himself that indelible something which belongs equally to the whole species, as well as that particular modification of it which individualizes him: that the woman is still woman, and however she may have debased herself, yet that we should still shew respect, still feel some reverence, if not for her sake, yet in awe to that Being, who saw good to stamp in her his own image, and forbade it ever, in this life at least, to be utterly erased.[88]

The heterodox radical engagement with Genesis and the 'myth' of creation can be found in the works of the free-thinkers Sharples and Carlile. Helen Rogers points to the possible influence of German theologians in Sharples' discussion of Adam and Eve in her radical journal *Isis* and reveals that the front cover of Carlile's *Every Woman's Book* had originally shown a naked Adam and Eve, illustrating the importance of physical love.[89]

Printed by Johnson, Aikin's *Epistles* entered the debate on sexual character with confidence. Although, Aikin disclaimed, in words reminiscent of her aunt's, the 'absurd idea that the two

[87] Ibid., p.12.
[88] See Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge*, p.95.
[89] See Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2000), pp.54-55, 74, n.25.

sexes ever can be, or ever ought to be, placed in all respects on a footing of equality', arguing that nature had sanctioned certain 'unalterable' differences, and that so long 'as the bodily constitution of the species shall remain the same, man must in general assume those public and active offices of life which confer authority', Aikin's use of language is revealing. The use of 'all respects' and 'general' suggest room for exceptions but more importantly, Aikin pointed to the 'impartial voice of History' and to observations in nature and to theories of evolution and human development, to testify that woman was a 'worthy associate'. There is nothing subordinate in the word 'associate'. 'Let the daily observation of mankind bear witness,' Aikin argued, 'that no talent, no virtue, is masculine alone; no fault or folly exclusively feminine;…that there is not an endowment, or propensity, or mental quality of any kind, which may not be derived from her father to the daughter, to the son from his mother'. Aikin's words would appear to reflect the evolutionary ideas of Darwin. In words reminiscent of her father, John Aikin,[90] Lucy Aikin seems implicitly to endorse the notion of heterosexual Uranianism, asserting that coming scholars, sages and 'patriots' will treat women as sisters and as friends. As with Hays' *Female Biography* and 'On the Rights of Woman' by the radical Unitarian writer, Thomas Norgate (1772-1859),[91] Aikin's *Epistles*, was one of a number of 'women worthy' histories written by men and women, which set out to promote the psycho-sexual equality of men and women, attributing woman's present state of subordination to culture rather than nature.[92] As Chernock observes, such histories were used to comment upon present inequities and to connect to 'larger claims about the nation and national identity, and about women's participation in the construction of that identity'. She points to Richard Dinmore's *A Brief Account of the Moral and Political Acts of the Kings*

[90] See Aikin, *Letters from a Father to his Son*.
[91] Thomas Starling Norgate, 'On the Rights of Woman', *Cabinet* (Norwich, 1795).
[92] See James Lawrence, *The Empire of the Nairs; or, The Rights of Women* (London, T. Hookham, 1811); Alexander Jardine, *Letters from Barbary, France, Spain, Portugal, Etc.* (London, T. Cadell, 1788); Arianne Chernock, 'Gender and the Politics of Exceptionalism in the Writing of British Women's History', in Pamela S. Nadell and Kate Haulman (eds.), *Making Women's History: Beyond National Perspectives* (New York, New York University Press, 2013), pp.115-136.

and Queens of England from William the Conqueror to the Revolution of the Year 1688 (1793), and its focus upon women 'above their sex'.[93] Thus, through what Aikin described as the 'impartial voice of history', heterodox radicals highlighted the importance of the liberating power of shared human experience, responsibility and identity, and, when allowed to move beyond the limits of cultural prescription and separate spheres, that history showed the minds of men and women to be unsexed.[94] As Chernock points out, such egalitarian arguments were used also to advocate the potential perfectibility of *all* citizens, men and women. [95]

Perhaps as a corollary to Wollstonecraft's argument that 'true happiness arose from the friendship and intimacy which can only be enjoyed by equals,'[96] and doubtless through his happy, if short-lived, marriage to Wollstonecraft, Godwin observed in *Memoirs of the Author of "The Rights of Woman"* (1798) that true friendship relied on a subtle degree of inequality between the participants. This inequality, for Godwin, was based not on notions of innate sexual difference but on notions of human variability, something with which Fox would most probably have agreed. It was this variability across the sexes that needed to be acknowledged if marriage was to work. 'Human beings differ so much in their tempers and views,' Godwin wrote, 'that, except in cases of a tender attachment, cohabitation brings with it small prospect of harmony and happiness'.[97] In other words, the assertion or prescription of doctrine and the precedence of custom would not bind an incompatible couple, as the Queen Caroline Affair in 1820 demonstrated only too well.[98] With the events of 1820 perhaps and of the less satisfactory experience of his second marriage to Mary Jane Clairmont in mind,[99] Godwin

[93] Chernock, 'Gender and the Politics of Exceptionalism', p.118.
[94] Aikin, *Epistles*, p.42.
[95] Chernock, 'Gender and the Politics of Exceptionalism', p.118.
[96] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.9.
[97] Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'* (London, Penguin Books, 1987), p.274.
[98] See Louise Carter, 'British Masculinities on Trial in the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820', *Gender & History* 20, No. 2 (August, 2008), pp.248-269.
[99] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.xxix.

would go on to criticise the perverse notions that attended the dissolubility of marriage. In *Thoughts on Man, his Nature, Productions and Discoveries* (1831) Godwin observed how the natural equality evident between the sexes meant that they did not always, 'afford the best subjects between whom to graft a habit of entire, unalterable affection'.[100] Again similarities might be noted between Godwin's use of 'graft' and Wollstonecraft's hermaphroditic description of the graceful ivy and the oak.[101] Godwin argued that emphasis placed upon male superiority and female deference led to 'warfare, where each party is for ever engaged in a struggle for superiority, and neither will give way.' In other words, it was the wilful rejection within society, religion and law of the evidence that the minds of men and women were in most things equal that led to discord and disharmony. 'Love cannot exist in its purest form with genuine ardour,' Godwin observed, 'where the parties are, and are felt by each other to be, on an equality; but that in all cases it is requisite there should be a mutual deference and submission, agreeably to the apostolic precept, "likewise all of you be subject one to the other."' Alluding to the Platonic concept of androgyny, Godwin urged that 'each party must feel that it stands in need of the other, and without the other cannot be complete...'[102] There is a notable, if subtle, difference between Godwin's notion of inequality in marriage and that advocated by Locke, Milton and Priestley.

For a man once wholly against heterosexual cohabitation in any form, Godwin's opinions on marriage mellowed markedly in the space of two to three years. This can of course be attributed to the positive influence of Wollstonecraft, as Philp observes.[103] In the third revised edition of *Political Justice*, the image of heterosexual Uranianism, though again implicit, is more than apparent. In describing the relationship between the sexes, Godwin's use of

[100] Godwin, *Thoughts on Man, his Nature, Productions and Discoveries* (London, William Pickering, 1831), pp.297-298.
[101] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.87
[102] Godwin, *Thoughts on Man*, pp.297-298.
[103] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.xxix.

language softened noticeably from the first edition in 1793 to the third in 1798. And while the first edition might reflect better the 'spirit of the times'[104] in which he first worked on *Political Justice,* the third edition reflects better the ways in which a more Platonic sensibility, through Wollstonecraft and others, came to inflect his ideas most especially on love and friendship. In the first edition Godwin referred dispassionately to 'the intercourse of the sexes'.[105] By the third edition this rather terse description had been replaced by, 'the mutual kindness of persons of an opposite sex…'[106] Although Godwin's language might betray a persistent squeamishness towards the sexual act or at least mentioning it, it is nonetheless noticeably more sympathetic. Again, in the first edition, the passage, 'Reasonable men then will propagate their species, not because a certain sensible pleasure is annexed to this action…,' is completely erased in the third edition. The most notable difference is that, though hardly gushing, from a rational and wholly negative discourse on marriage and the perfunctory propagation of the species, Godwin's critique becomes infinitely more positive and intimate. From viewing mankind and in particular womankind with the indifference of a philosophical misanthrope, Godwin's view becomes that of a sympathetic fellow traveller. Though still opposed to the legal falsities of matrimony, in the third edition he appears more concerned with outlining the characteristics and virtues of a compatible marriage. Cohabitation, when based on friendship and compatibility was no longer, for Godwin, perceived as a check to 'the independent progress of mind'. Where true friendship existed between a married couple, it offered 'one of the most exquisite gratifications, perhaps one of the most improving exercises, of a rational mind.'[107]

[104] Ibid., p.xxxvi.
[105] Ibid., p.447.
[106] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice: And Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1798), ed. by Isaac Kramnick (London, Penguin Books, 2015), pp.510-511.
[107] Ibid., pp.508-510.

For heterodox radicals, influenced by the spirit of Platonism, friendship had become the crucial and obvious ingredient to happy heterosexual relationships. If the contemporary state of marital strife and stale-mate was not proof enough to end the religious sanctions on human free will in the form of divorce, the ancient pre-biblical precepts articulated by Plato in the *Symposium* provided a more progressive and sympathetic template. Man's natural 'inconstancy' and fallibility was underlined by Diotima who rejected any talk of human constancy in favour of a process in which each individual underwent a perpetual and organic process of change: 'And not only does this change take place in the body, but also with respect to the soul. Manners, morals, opinions, desires, pleasures, sorrows, fears; none of these ever remain unchanged in the same persons; but some die away and other are produced.'[108] Change and inconstancy were just part of the process of natural evolution. If intelligent design existed, then Man's inconstancy was part of that necessary and higher process of development and progress. Proof of humankind's natural inconstancy provided the means by which to challenge the sacred dissolubility of marriage and the hypocritical and contradictory theories of sexual difference and expediency, upon which the institution was built.

Heterosexual Uranianism and Marriage

Several scholarly studies consider in varying depth the nature of friendship within marriage and in particular the notion of 'heavenly love' or 'higher love'. The classical origin of this concept is often cited and yet its Platonic influence is seldom if at all mentioned.[109] The concept of 'higher love' in these studies is considered almost entirely in conjunction with Wollstonecraft and Mill and as such portrayed as the product of an isolated exceptionalism

[108] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, [207e], p.52.
[109] Jean Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1980); Mary Lyndon Shanley, 'Marital Slavery and Friendship: John Stuart Mill's 'The Subjection of Women', *Political Theory* 9, no. 2 (May, 1981), pp.229-247; Ruth Abbey, 'Back to the Future: Marriage as Friendship in the Thought of Mary Wollstonecraft', *Hypatia* 14, no. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp.78-95; Nadia Urbanati, 'John Stuart Mill on Androgyny and Ideal Marriage', *Political Theory* 19, no. 4 (November 1991), pp.626-648.

and more often than not as evidence of sexual prudishness and support of celibacy within marriage. Yet, as evidenced by the implicit accounts of heterodox radicals, heterosexual Uranianism or 'higher love' did not represent the celibate state but instead the most creative and 'pregnant' state, because it allowed, theoretically, for the married couple to be both physically and mentally procreative. The relationship between Godwin and Wollstonecraft might be cited as a prime example in which both were intellectually and physically creative and in which loving friendship, as Godwin suggested, became a 'most improving' exercise.[110]

Shelley's beautiful description of heterosexual Uranianism in his translation of the *Symposium* would itself appear to offer a critique upon contemporary marital practices. The paragraphs copied below are most revealing. Accounting for slight variation in translation, Shelley refers to youths choosing, 'as the objects of their love those in whom the intellectual faculties have begun to develop: in preference to mere youths', he continues, however, by adding:

> For those who begin to love in this manner, seem to me to be preparing to pass their whole life together in a community of good and evil, and not ever lightly deceiving those who love them to be faithless to their vows.[111]

In Jowett's later translation, Shelley's second paragraph is completely missing.[112] Thinking again of Jowett's objectives in translating the *Symposium*, discussed in chapter one, we might infer that he had no interest in critiquing contemporary marriage practices. We may read in the second paragraph a sense of Shelley's own regrets[113] and the belief that what he considered to have been necessary deceptions would be lessened, if not erased, in a reformed society. Shelly's translation would appear more than a diplomatic avoidance of the illicit. It

[110] See p.230.
[111] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, [181d], pp.15-16.
[112] Jowett, 'Symposium', [181d], pp.114-117.
[113] Shelley eloped with Mary Godwin, abandoning his wife, Harriet. She later committed suicide. See O'Neil, 'Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792–1822)'.

can be argued that Shelley used Plato's discourse on higher love and companionship to promote marital harmony based on two key virtues, friendship, and intellectual compatibility, both of which were dependent upon the development of rounded individuals. Homosexual love, so evident in earlier and indeed later, more faithful, translations, is rendered more ambiguous in Shelley's translation so as to allow for a broader definition of love. It also allows for a broader reading of Diotima's understanding of intellectual progeny [209a-c]. Where Jowett's translation speaks of intellectual progeny as the preserve of men only, Shelley's translation is more ambiguous, or perhaps simply more circumspect. Yet, Mary's comment to Hunt that she hoped people would understand their type of 'civilised love'[114] without having to alter Shelley's translation would suggest that Shelley had meant to be ambiguous in order to press home a more egalitarian and in some respects more radical interpretation because it suggests that not only men but women also might chose to be mentally rather than physically procreative. For as Shelley wrote in the preface to *Prometheus Unbound*: 'I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus'. People were mistaken, Shelley explained, if they thought his poetry was dedicated 'solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life'. Shelley's intention was instead, he wrote, 'to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence'.[115] Though never published in his life-time, it can be argued that Shelley wished his translation of the *Symposium* to do just that. It was to sew a seed in the minds of those ready to receive it. As comments in his preface to 'Laon and Cythna' on the French Revolution and the power of the mob would suggest, Shelley was no out and out democrat.[116] For Shelley and others, the progeny of heterosexual Uranianism would be more perfect because it would be the product of intellectual and

[114] Shelley Wollstonecraft, 'Letter 508. To Leigh Hunt (October 1839)'.
[115] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poems and Prose*, ed. by Timothy Webb (London, Everyman, 1995), p.110.
[116] Shelley, '*Laon and Cythna'*, pp.viii-xii.

physical union which together would be the most enduring. Alluding perhaps to this idea of a duel procreancy in the *Symposium,* Coleridge wrote that friendship satisfied the 'highest parts of our nature; but a wife, who is capable of friendship, satisfies all.'[117] The subtle hierarchy present in the traditional pederastic relationship would appear redundant in its heterosexual form. Within this higher 'heterosexual' love, men and women, as Godwin intimated, would act simultaneously as teacher and student.[118] The latter presented a picture of a future untrammelled by the prejudices of contemporary society. Educated alike and thus liberated from notions of sexual excellence and difference, and thus from the potential confines of the private and public spheres, boys and girls would one day be free to explore compatible relationships with independent and intellectual equals. Any 'differences' between the two partners would be, as Fox implied, the products of an 'infinitely varied humanity'.[119]

References to friendship appear with frequency in heterodox radical critiques. Writing of his (possibly consummated) love for Sara Hutchinson,[120] Coleridge described how he had:

> loved…truly…not in a fanciful attributing of certain ideal perfections to an existing Being, who possesses perhaps not one of them; but in a true and palpable sympathy of manners, sentiments, & affections. So have I loved one woman; & believe that such a love of such a Woman is the highest Friendship? For we cannot love a Friend as a Woman, but we can love a Woman as a Friend.[121]

Not only does this again point to Coleridge's knowledge of the *Symposium*, it highlights the importance invested in friendship as the means to erasing mystery within marriage and to informing the union of like and compatible minds. Even though Coleridge would later appear to reject notions of the unsexed mind or 'soul', his willingness, as he put it in a letter

[117] Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge*, p.97. Arguably, Coleridge's fears of effeminacy and his unhappy marriage affected his belief in androgyny.
[118] See Godwin, *Thoughts on Man*, pp.297-298.
[119] Fox, On National Education - Lecture I', pp.15-16.
[120] Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge*, p.97.
[121] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Marginalia', *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by H.J. Jackson and George Whalley, vol. 6 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001), 1.751.

'To a Lady' published in the *Friend* in 1809, to 'hazard the impeachment of heresy', amongst his friends and associates, is evidence, arguably, of the centrality of the concept of psychological androgyny in heterodox radical discourse.[122] Fulford highlights the distinction that Coleridge made between homosocial friendship between men and the heterosexual friendship between a man and a woman that led to true love. Like Shelley, Coleridge suggested that the highest friendship, because ultimately the closest in mind and body, was with a woman rather than a man:

> For Love is a Desire of the whole Being to be united to some object, as necessary to its completion in the most perfect manner that Reason dictates and nature permits. And herein does Friendship differ from Love, that it is not (or in the case of man and man), cannot be a union of the whole Being - Perfect Friendship is only possible between Man and Wife: even as there is to be found the bitterest enmity.[123]

Coleridge's image of 'Perfect Friendship' and his reference to the necessary union for completion 'in the most perfect manner' is infused with Platonic eros – through love one progressed to Heaven - and although 'the bitterest enmity' might quite reasonably be a reference to his own marital relations; it might also be an implicit reference to the *Symposium* and to Pausanias' description of Uranianism as something in which two lovers or soul-mates prepare 'to pass their whole life together in a community of good and evil'.[124] For Coleridge[125] as for Shelley, Godwin, Wollstonecraft and Fox, friendship was the only real guarantor against promiscuity and unhappiness. In 1833 Fox published 'A Victim – written by Mehetabel Wesley, sister of John and Charles Wesley' in the *Monthly Repository*. His aim was to illustrate the harsh reality of unequal marriage, in which women, poorly educated and kept in a 'state of pupilage' by family and society were forced into lives of 'subservience' and

[122] Coleridge, 'No. 16, Thursday, December 7, 1809, Letter II', *Friend*, p.242.
[123] Coleridge, 'Lectures 1808-1819 On Literature', p.498.
[124] Shelley, *Symposium of Plato*, [181d], p.15.
[125] For a discussion on Coleridge's close friendships with women, see Taylor, *Erotic Coleridge.*

the ‘solemn renunciation’ of their free agency. The reprinting of correspondence, supposedly, between Mehetabel Wesley and her father regarding her ill-chosen husband, served also to highlight what a good marriage should be: ‘I had not always such notions of wedlock as now’, wrote Mehetabel, ‘but thought where there was a mutual affection and desire of pleasing, something near an equality of mind and person, either earthly or heavenly wisdom, and anything to keep love warm between a young couple, there was a *possibility* of happiness in a married state’.[126] It is impossible to know whether the letter was real or not; the sentiments revealed in it, however, are strikingly Platonic both in their reverence of spiritual and physical intimacy but also in the image of psycho-sexual equality and union.

In radical critiques heterosexual friendship was raised parallel with, if not above, that of male homosocial friendship. If Coleridge’s relationships with women were not the egalitarian affairs he would appear to have desired, contemporary cultural practices and life experience (a hopelessly unsatisfactory marriage) must make us pause before rejecting Coleridge’s more egalitarian thoughts and the influence of Platonism upon these. Regardless of religious affiliations, heterodox radicals redefined the intellectual parameters of marriage by reimagining it as something founded upon and preserved by friendship. Marital friendship was the only friendship in which the ‘longed-for union’ as S.J. Barth and J. Robert describe it, could be achieved at every level.[127]

Platonic Love Misinterpreted

We should not, however, view this Platonic influence as something that inspired feelings of transcendent celibacy in its votaries. The numerous references to higher friendship in marriage voiced by heterodox radicals, and in particular Romantics amongst them, should not be interpreted as the sanctioning of sexual abstinence and celibacy, even if some from the late

[126] ‘A Victim – written by Mehetabel Wesley, sister of John and Charles Wesley’, *Monthly Repository* (January 1833), p.173.
[127] S.J. Barth and J. Robert, *Coleridge and the Power of Love* (Missouri, University of Missouri Press, 1989), p.21.

eighteenth century argued otherwise. Somewhat paradoxically, while some accused Platonism of encouraging immoral behaviour, others accuse it of quite the opposite: of imparting false and romanticised ideas upon innocent and impressionable minds. In *Strictures on Female Education* (1793), the Rev. John Bennett accused 'Platonists,' of refining love 'into an abstracted union of souls, independent of matter, as if we were pure, disembodied spirits, or as if the physical instinct, for the propagation of the species, had not been implanted in us by a Being, who never errs...'[128] The association of Platonism with a form of sexual asceticism emanates from the belief that the philosophy – outside of its associations with pederasty - was essentially mystical and metaphysical.[129] And for some such as Boehme, it was. Yet, the heterodox debate on free love and contraception that emerged as a critical response to Malthusian theories of population control and abstinence, helps to illustrate how the influence of Platonism upon heterodox notions of love and friendship was not always mystical or inhibitory.[130] What these heterodox critiques on love and friendship serve to emphasise is the degree to which again they departed not only from broader society but from sexually-conventional political radicals such as the journalist and editor of *Black Dwarf*, Thomas Wooler (c.1786-1853).[131] Even where ambivalence and caution would appear to weigh upon their opinions, it would seem that a resurgent interest in Platonism and its theories of love, friendship and human perfectibility, imparted a far more egalitarian hue to the ideas of heterodox radicals.

Richard Sha thus warns rightly of viewing the Romantic era as the 'asexual zone between eighteenth-century Edenic 'liberated' sexuality and guiltless pleasures, and the repressive

[128] Bennett, *Strictures on Female Education*, pp.38-39.
[129] Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, pp.59-61.
[130] See Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.54-55;
[131] See Peter Fryer, *The Birth Controllers* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1965), pp.79-85.

sexology of the Victorians.'[132] When not accused of immorality, Platonists were accused of denying the very essence and purpose of human sexuality. And the opinion has, it would seem to a degree, stuck. There has been much debate over the nature of sexuality in Wollstonecraft's work and whether or not she advocated, outside of procreation, non-sexual relationships, arguing that:

> personal attachment is a very happy foundation for friendship…friendship is a serious affection; the most sublime of all affections, because it is founded on principle, and cemented by time. The very reverse may be said of love. In a great degree, love and friendship cannot subsist in the same bosom…The vain fears and fond jealousies, the winds which fan the flame of love, when judiciously or artfully tempered, are both incompatible with the tender confidence and sincere respect of friendship.[133]

Although many cite the evolution in opinion that Wollstonecraft underwent between writing the above and her doomed and passionate relationship with the American army captain and commercial adventurer, Gilbert Imlay (1754-1828),[134] do her early criticisms of love in marriage really betoken an asexual, even prudish, view? Perhaps they do. And yet, it can be argued that she and other heterodox radicals, influenced by Platonism, did not use friendship to represent sexless relationships but rather to warn against the polarizing and degrading nature of marriage based purely on sexual attraction and absolute difference. As Taylor points out Wollstonecraft's many negative comments on sexual desire, especially in *Rights of Woman* - often associated with her devotion to Platonic eros - have been viewed by some such as Cora Kaplan as evidence of the radical author's antipathy towards physical sexuality and her near puritanical ambivalence towards female sexuality in particular. Of course, Wollstonecraft's 'anti-erotic rhetoric' was in part, as Taylor argues, 'polemical and class

[132] Richard C. Sha, 'Romanticism and Sexuality', in Romanticism on the Net, 23 (August 2001) http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/guest12.html.
[133] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.145.
[134] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.8.

specific: a caricature of aristocratic womanhood common to virtually all middle-class morality literature'.[135] Yet, as Taylor also rightly asserts, Wollstonecraft's opinions and those of many of her peers were based on an appreciation, sometimes first-hand, of the devastating effects of 'unregulated sexual behaviour'.[136] Nor was this appreciation based on illicit relationships or examples of abandonment but could be found in households throughout the country.

Writing in *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), Godwin, described the relationship between Mary's parents as one of despotism and submission. It is possible to see in this incompatible relationship, perhaps entered into by characters of 'quick, impetuous disposition', Mary's distrust of the 'sexual' partnership devoid of common understanding.[137] It was certainly a situation in which many married couples at this time found themselves. Mary had herself been tempted by physical desire in her relationship with Imlay and, while society existed as it did, was doubtless keen to avoid such material temptations in the future without the necessary proofs of love and loyalty.[138] In something of an unrequited love letter written to a member of the Johnson group, the Swiss painter Henry Fuseli (1741-1825) in 1792, Wollstonecraft alluded to the fears of finding herself caught in a degrading relationship based purely on sexual attraction:

> I hope to unite [myself] to [your] mind…[I] was designed to rise superior to [my] earthly habitation,…[I] always thought, with some degree of horror, of falling a sacrifice to a passion which may have a mixture of dross in it.[139]

It was precisely that to which Wollstonecraft would fall victim to in 1793 when in Paris she met Imlay.[140] Godwin understood Wollstonecraft to have been ever desirous of what he

[135] Ibid., p.117.
[136] Ibid., p.119.
[137] Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author*, pp.205-206.
[138] See Frost, *Living in Sin*, pp.172-173.
[139] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'To Henry Fuseli, [speculative reconstruction][London, ?late 1792]', in Janet Todd (ed.) *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London, Penguin Books, 2003), p.205.

described as 'domestic affections'. 'She conceived,' he explained, 'that true virtue would prescribe the most entire celibacy, exclusive of affection, and the most perfect fidelity to that affection when it existed.'[141] But as Godwin's words illustrate, Wollstonecraft did not use the androgyneity of heterosexual Uranianism to encourage sexless relationships. Wollstonecraft, along with fellow heterodox radicals, used it to warn against the polarising and degrading nature of cohabitation based purely on sexual attraction and absolute, immutable difference. In the above extract, Wollstonecraft would appear almost to use 'love' as an ironic euphemism for 'lust', as if poking fun at society's crude generalisations and misunderstanding of the state. She alludes to society's twisted and shrivelled notions of 'love':

> It has generally been observed by a German writer, that a pretty woman, as an object of desire, is generally allowed to be so by men of all descriptions; whilst a fine woman, who inspires more sublime emotions by displaying intellectual beauty, may be overlooked or observed with indifference, by those men who find their happiness in the gratification of their appetites. [142]

Sexual love within marriage was not to be rejected. Wollstonecraft clearly states that the distinction of sex should be confounded 'unless when love animates the behaviour.'[143] On the contrary, it was to be encouraged but as part of a loving, reciprocal union and as part of a crucial stage on the path towards individual and collective perfectibility. For as Coleridge explained:

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[140] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.8.
[141] Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author*, p.235.
[142] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.115. We do not know who the German writer was but the opinions voiced above show parallels with those expressed by the German satirist and friend of Kant, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel in his *On Improving the Status of Women* published in Germany in 1792. Wollstonecraft read German by this time. Hippel's work was translated into English in 1979 by Timothy F. Sellner. He suggests that Wollstonecraft and Hippel may have been aware of each other's work. See pp.20-21.
[143] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.126.

> Plato has said, that in this way we rise from sensuality to affection, from affection to love, and from love to the pure intellectual delight by which we become worthy to conceive that infinite in ourselves, without which it is impossible for man to believe in a God.'[144]

In this respect, our understanding of the notion of 'friend' in such works is perhaps in need of reassessment. In talking of his relationship with Wollstonecraft, Godwin described 'friendship melting into love.'[145] Taylor's insightful analysis of Wollstonecraft's 'eroticism' is particularly informative. She refers to Wollstonecraft's love of the 'snug blend of domestic busyness, and mutual affection for little 'Fannikens', with arguments over literary matters, shared friendships with other radical intellectuals, and of course the sexy nights, plenty of sexy nights'.[146] Cleary, the heterodox radical notion of higher friendship, as an integral element in the concept of psychological androgyny, was not, therefore, a symbol of asexuality or asceticism. It was instead a symbol of sexual and intellectual compatibility as this passage by Shelley written in 1818 illustrates:

> …a certain degree of civilisation and refinement ever produces the want of sympathies still more intimate and complete; and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is sought in sexual connection. It soon becomes a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment which we call love, which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive; and which, when individualised, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete or partial, actual or supposed, fulfilment of its claims.[147]

[144] Coleridge, 'Lectures 1808-1819 On Literature', vol. 2, p.499.
[145] C. Kegan Paul (ed.), *Mary Wollstonecraft: Letters to Imlay* (London, 1879), p.liv.
[146] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p.125.
[147] See Shelley, 'On the Literature, the Arts, and the Manners of the Athenians - A fragment', pp.17-21.

Eliza Flower (1770-1810), the wife of the radical publisher, Benjamin Flower, described their marriage in Platonic terms as a 'wreath of affection and friendship,' made possible by an 'affinity of soul.'[148] The Platonised notion of the unsexed mind is present.

Quite evidently, therefore, heterodox radicals did not consider higher love to preclude sensual enjoyment. Godwin argued that in marriage, friendship would, 'come in aid of the sexual intercourse, to refine its grossness, and increase its delight.'[149] Nor should Godwin's use of 'grossness' necessarily imply a distaste for the sexual act but the acknowledgement rather that love in its purely sensual form, was a less civilised and lower or Pandemic form of love. In a reference seemingly to Pandemic love, Wollstonecraft warned that friendship and shared intellectual experience were, 'necessary to give variety and interest to sensual enjoyments, for low, indeed, in the intellectual scale, is the mind that can continue to love when neither virtue nor sense give a human appearance to an animal appetite.'[150] Voicing concerns to his friend and fellow-poet, Robert Southey (1774-1843), shortly before his marriage to Sara Fricker, Coleridge worried that marrying a woman he did not love would 'degrade her…by making her the instrument of low desire…'[151]

Again, Wollstonecraft's knowledge of Platonism and the *Symposium* is perhaps evident in her caveat to young ladies that 'those…who are only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister [Pandemic love], will soon become objects of contempt'.[152] Though implicit, the reference to Pausanias' description of the two Venuses - the sisters Urania and Pandemos - is quite pointed.

[148] Eliza Gould, 'Letter 52' in Timothy Whelan (ed.) *Politics, Religion and Romance: The letters of Benjamin Flower and Eliza Gould Flower, 1794 – 1808,* pp.173-174.
[149] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1797), pp.508-510.
[150] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.261.
[151] Coleridge, 'To Robert Southey, 29th December 1794', *Collected Letters*, vol.1, p.145.
[152] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.73.

In similar vein to Godwin, many of Wollstonecraft's opinions on marriage suggest a certain aversion to sexual passion, certainly with the arrival of children and parental responsibility. 'In a great degree,' Wollstonecraft argued, 'love and friendship cannot subsist in the same bosom.' But Wollstonecraft would appear to refer to the type of sensual love that lacked 'sufficient intellect to substitute the calm tenderness of friendship, the confidence of respect, instead of blind admiration, and the sensual emotions of fondness.'[153] When Wollstonecraft wrote of letting 'passion subside into friendship', she rather importantly followed this by the description of 'tender intimacy'.[154] Wollstonecraft would therefore appear not to have advocated a celibate and chaste marriage but one that merely accepted the transitory and ephemeral nature of sexual passion. For in the course of nature, she asserted, 'friendship or indifference [always] succeeds love.'[155] A lasting marriage had naturally to be based on more than physical attraction. Wollstonecraft's description of 'love', certainly within contemporary experience and understanding of marital love, was used, arguably, to describe the initial flights of passion necessary for heterosexual union. But as Shelley pointed out, the sensual form of 'love' as described above by Wollstonecraft was just a 'small part…of the rest, a common basis, an acknowledged and visible link.'[156] The 'obvious and external nature' of this love provided the initial link through which the internal and less visible links would emerge. Although Aristophanes' tale of the androgynes clearly acknowledged the part that sexual and physical difference played in uniting a couple, it was psychological similarity, through understanding and friendship that kept a couple together, regardless of a solemn vow. 'Intimate society between people radically dissimilar to one another,' Mill wrote, 'is an idle dream. Unlikeness may attract, but it is likeness, which retains; and in proportion to the

[153] Ibid., pp.96-97.
[154] Ibid., p.269.
[155] Ibid., pp.96-97.
[156] Shelley, 'On the Literature, the Arts, and the Manners of the Athenians - A fragment', pp.17-21.

likeness is the suitability of the individuals to give each other a happy life.'[157] The relationships between Wollstonecraft and Godwin and indeed between Shelley and Mary Godwin are fitting, if at times flawed, examples of Platonic heterosexual Uranianism. Through higher love in marriage, the intellectual and emotional equilibrium described in Barmby's androgynous 'Woman-Man-Power', would be born again more complete and more tangible in succeeding generations.

Conclusion

Although Unitarians were conspicuous in the debate on the 'marriage question', this chapter demonstrates that the principles put forward by heterodox radicals, namely that marriage was a civil contract based on notions of friendship and compatibility and therefore dissoluble, had little to do with the nitty-gritty of doctrinal observance. Moreover, such principles represented a marked deviation not only from Anglican and evangelical but Rational Dissenting views on marriage and notions of sexual hierarchy. The omission of 'obey' and 'serve' from Worsley's Dunkirk prayer book and its decided dilution in Disney's version are evidence of attempts by heterodox radicals to eradicate the prejudicial distinctions between men and women in the domestic and private sphere but with the suggestion that similar might occur thereafter in the public sphere as well. The language of Platonism and the theories that emerged from it on double Love, friendship and the unsexed mind, helped to inform such ideas. Encouraged by the German-led reanalysis of Plato and in particular the Bible, heterodox radicals in England reignited the Genesis debate on creation and challenged the patriarchal interpretation of spousal unity and inequality. While supporters of the principles of patriarchy – conservative and radicals alike - interpreted 'one flesh' to incorporate a necessary hierarchical distinction between the sexes, the latter discerned in that union of flesh no such sexual distinction.

[157] John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London, Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869), p.170.

With the profound, and for some, disconcerting, alterations to family and state organisation that the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny seemed to auger, the following chapter or coda poses some questions and avenues for future research as to why this radical and egalitarian concept of psycho-sexual equality failed to gain ground in the Victorian era and why the blame in part might lie with the passing of the Great Reform Act in 1832 and the growth of what today is more commonly termed gender politics.

Chapter Five

The Decline of the Heterodox Radical Concept of Psychological Androgyny after 1832

I wish to use this final chapter to give some thought to why the heterodox interpretation of psychological androgyny might have failed to challenge significantly notions of sexual difference and the ascendency of separate spheres. Never part of the mainstream and never even part of what we might describe as orthodox radicalism, it is perhaps hardly surprising that this largely implicit and rather ambiguous egalitarian concept should find itself all but eclipsed by the ideology of separate spheres by the beginning of the Victorian era. The early deaths of a number of its key exponents, such as Wollstonecraft and Shelley, its association with Platonism and illicit sexual acts, as too its links to Jacobinism and foreign and in particular German ideas, can all be viewed as contributing factors in its decline, but these factors do not fully explain why the egalitarian concept, which for a while amongst groups such as the Owenites and the Saint-Simonians had appeared to hold a degree of popularity, should have declined in quite the way that it did.

In this final chapter or coda, I wish to put forward the suggestion that the Great Reform Act of 1832 played a significant role in the decline of this egalitarian concept. But if heterodox radicals were largely unconcerned with matters of parliamentary reform and universal suffrage, believing that equality in the public sphere would come as a result of reforms to the private, why might the Great Reform Act represent a pivotal moment in the decline of the concept of psychological androgyny? More research is of course required, and I certainly do not intend to offer any comprehensive theory in a short chapter or coda, but I wish to suggest that in so far as this largely privately-oriented concept was concerned, political reform in 1832 achieved two things: it set in motion a series of reforms that would have a significant impact on the private and domestic sphere and it succeeded in helping to endorse the patriarchal doctrine of separate spheres across the social spectrum. By considering the impact

of reform upon the heterodox radical Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny, we might see in the success of the notably gendered doctrine of separate spheres not a marked divergence from the concept of androgyny but instead the endorsement and championing of the biblical interpretation of androgyny. Usurped by heterodox radicals to mount a stinging critique on the inequities of society, the traditional biblical notion of androgyny, initially championed by middle-class evangelicals as the marriage of complementary opposites, was, it might seem, reclaimed and endorsed not only in the 'provisions' of reform in 1832 but in a series of reforms enacted thereafter. Rather than an egalitarian symbol of psycho-sexual equality in which androgynous characteristics existed to be developed in the individual and from which socio-political equality would naturally emerge, the doctrine of separate spheres that came to epitomise the Victorian era might be said to have represented instead the androgynous union of complementary opposites and psycho-sexual difference. This traditional form of androgyny in which the supremacy of the male and the relative subordination of the female was reasserted would certainly make more sense of feminist criticism of the 1970s. The Great Reform Act might be viewed not only as a challenge to political radicalism but as a significant impediment to the ability of heterodox radicals to challenge the structure and system of patriarchy in the private and domestic sphere.

The Great Reform Act of 1832

Much has already been written on the provisions of the Great Reform Act of 1832 and it is not my intention to repeat these. I am indebted, however, to the research of a number of scholars on the era of reform.[1] In so far as the Reform Act of 1832 is concerned, I wish to

[1] See Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995); Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender, and Political Culture in Britain 1815-1867* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009); McCormack, *Independent Man*; Catherine Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', in Ida Blom, Catherine Hall and Karen Hagemann (eds.), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, Berg, 2000); James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, Routledge, 2013).

confine my observations to two key aspects, the formal omission of women from the right to vote and the standardising of the property qualification.

On paper, the Great Reform Act of 1832 represents the point at which the middle-class joined the electorate. It represents a break-through in the challenge for democracy. Yet, according to James Vernon, reform in 1832 was less than great and in many respects distinctly conservative. Influenced by a second revolution in France and by increasing levels of unrest across the country, rather than 'a great expansive step forward', reform in 1832 was for Vernon more of 'a restrictive step backwards' in its attempts to limit popular representation'.[2] Out of a population of roughly sixteen million across England and Wales, 217,000 voters were added to an electorate of just 435,000.[3] There was of course some positive change; the majority of rotten and pocket boroughs were disenfranchised and their seats reallocated to hitherto unrepresented urban centres of industry; many of them in the north. Yet, the extension of the franchise was by no means significant and the balance of power between county and borough constituencies barely changed.[4] Vernon's description of a 'restrictive step backwards' is supported by Frank O'Gorman's findings that, prior to 1832, the electorate had in fact been 'steadily increasing' and was 'numerically impressive', with more and more forty shilling freeholders being admitted to the electorate as general prosperity increased across the country.[5] The piecemeal way in which the borough constituencies had emerged and developed over the centuries meant that different boroughs had different rules pertaining to who could and could not vote. In some boroughs, the middle classes were already being admitted to the electorate along with numbers from amongst the lower classes as well. In the last election held in Lewes prior to 1832, over 10 per cent of the electorate were apparently

[2] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p.39.
[3] Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', p.107.
[4] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p.39.
[5] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, p.389.

labourers.[6] And though extremely rare, there is evidence that women freeholders were on occasion amongst the numbers voting for members of parliament.[7] Under the old system, open boroughs had allowed *all* male inhabitants, including male visitors, to vote. For some, this uncontrolled expansion of the democratic process represented a threat to the natural balance and hierarchy of aristocratic and Anglican rule, certainly as numbers from the more radical and heterodox urban classes started to be admitted.[8] As Vernon notes, the establishing of 'uniformly exclusive electoral qualifications' - the introduction of the £10 property qualification - provided a means of controlling expansion and controlling the type of person admitted. While the male inhabitants of the old open boroughs, such as the radical borough of Westminster, did not automatically lose their vote after June 1832, the introduction of the standard property qualification meant that the broad and more egalitarian nature of the voting public in such places was noticeably and increasingly curtailed as year after year voters from the old system passed away. [9]For some, the Great Reform Act represented a marked setback.

The 'Male' Voter

The inclusion of 'Male' was a seemingly minor addition slipped quietly and without discussion or ceremony into the final Act. Up until 1832, the gender-neutral 'Person' had always been used in reference to the population as a whole and for much of the *Act to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales* the customary use of 'Person' was maintained except for two crucial clauses relating to the extension of the 'Right of voting'. Clauses XIX and XX added the prefix, 'Male'. The revised wording of the Act read: 'And be it enacted that every Male Person of full Age, and not subject to any legal Incapacity…shall be entitled to vote in the Election.'[10] As Hilda L. Smith notes, however, the use of 'Person'

[6] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p.34.
[7] Richardson, *Political Worlds of Women*, pp.85-86.
[8] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, pp.55-56
[9]Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p.39.
[10] *The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 2 & 3 William IV. 1832* (London, 1832), p. 159.

had in fact always represented what she describes as a 'false universal', meaning that it assumed that the voter would naturally be male and that the needs and rights of wives, mothers and daughters were subsumed within those of their male protectors and guardians.[11] If then 'Person' had always been assumed to be male, why then did reformers in England feel the need to put this in writing? It is a question that has been asked by several scholars, including Hall and Gleadle. If Scotland had not felt the need to define the sex of its voters, why did England? As Gleadle notes, that women were formally omitted from the statutes in England, Wales and Ireland, would suggest that there was at least thought to be a, 'theoretical possibility that [the hitherto ambiguous wording of the statutes] might be open to challenge'.[12] Hall supports this theory, arguing that 'the naming of the vote as a masculine privilege could only have been necessary if at some level it was felt that this could no longer be assumed'.[13] Of course, adding 'Male' does not of itself imply a rise in female activism or political activity; what it might have indicated was concern over the perceived growth in popularity of heterodox groups such as the Owenites. Gleadle, Thompson, Rogers, Sarah Richardson and Hall all emphasise the complicated and by no means purely vicarious nature of female political participation prior to 1832, certainly within local parishes and communities.[14] The campaigns for the abolition of slavery and the Queen Caroline Affair were conspicuous for female intervention and as Gleadle highlights, elite members of Grey's cabinet were 'fully accustomed to drawing upon the politicking skills of aristocratic women'.[15] Female-only unions and societies were also on the rise across working class centres in particular. Just how much of this, prior to 1832, represented the active inclusion of

[11] Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640-1832* (Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp.2-3.
[12] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p.160.
[13] Hall, 'The Rule of Difference', p.125.
[14] For discussions on the political participation of women outside general elections, see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*; Dorothy Thompson, *Outsiders: Class, Gender and Nation* (London and New York, Verso, 1993); Rogers, *Women and the People*; Richardson, *Political Worlds of Women*; Gleadle and Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke and London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000).
[15] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 161.

women in politics or the development of a feminist consciousness is difficult to gauge, as Rogers points out.[16] Richardson, however, highlights the political rights of some single propertied women in Parish governance between 1600 and 1800, pointing to the number of women who held positions as sextonesses. However, these responsible community based roles were often described as private rather than public offices and thus deemed appropriate for women.[17] As Richardson rightly notes, such evidence challenges the interpretation that women had no right or opportunity to exercise citizenship in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. In so far as parliamentary elections were concerned, the introduction of 'Male' into the Great Reform Act could be viewed as a means of ending any ambivalence or recourse to time-consuming legal contests and arguments of expediency. A newly reformed Parliament would go on to further restrict the voting rights of women. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 formally excluded women from voting for town councils by again adding the word 'Male'.[18] Yet, as Gleadle points out, despite consideration of female citizenship in Parliament, no official discussion took place over the insertion of 'Male' prior to the passing of the Reform Act in 1832.[19] Nor would it appear was there much concern raised afterwards beyond heterodox radical circles. Days after the Act was passed, Fox's *Repository* picked up on the introduction of 'Male': 'How long will it be', Fox asked, 'before we may speak of a nation, the people, the many, without there being any antithetical term to words which ought to be all-comprehensive?'[20] On 3rd August 1832, almost two months after the Act was passed, the political radical and member for Preston, Henry 'Orator' Hunt (1773-1835) presented the House of Commons with a petition from Mary Smith, a wealthy and

[16] See Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.94-95; Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp.203-214; Rogers, *Women and the People*, pp.58-59.
[17] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, pp.85-86.
[18] Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), p.97.
[19] On rights of Freewomen, see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, pp.164-168.
[20] 'The Recent Political Crisis', *Monthly Repository* (June 1832), p.397. Articles by Fox on the progress of the Reform Bill appeared in the *Repository* in November 1831 and January 1832, suggesting a growing interest in political representation. Female suffrage is not mentioned directly.

propertied woman from Stanmore in Yorkshire, who asked that women of her status be given the vote like their male counterparts:

> The petitioner stated that she paid taxes, and therefore did not see why she should not have a share in the election of a Representative; she also stated that women were liable to all the punishments of the law, not excepting death, and ought to have a voice in the making of them; but so far from this, even upon their trials, both judges and jurors were all of the opposite sex. She could see no good reason for the exclusion of women from social rights, while the highest office of the State, that of the Crown, was open to the inheritance of females…[21]

Although acknowledging that the petition deserved consideration, Hunt's representation was apologetic and short and the response to the petition even shorter. A month later, it was again the *Repository* that referred directly to Smith and her petition and to the 'pot-house ribaldry' that followed its presentation in the House of Commons.[22]

Yet, the lack of discussion before and afterwards is perhaps hardly surprising. Aside from a small minority of political and heterodox radicals, such as Wollstonecraft and Spence, who openly advocated universal male/female suffrage, votes for women was it would seem a wholly marginal affair. It was certainly of little concern for the broader generality of Rational Dissenters or the majority of political radicals. Furthermore, as this thesis demonstrates, heterodox radicals had themselves been largely uninterested in the battle for suffrage, certainly prior to 1832, seeing it as part of an extended and sequential process linked to the primary and necessary development of education and knowledge. Discerning scrutiny regarding the matter of the sex of the voter was not there.

For heterodox radicals, the inclusion of 'Male' might be said to have come as an unwelcome surprise, but not because they had expected to see women admitted to the franchise but

[21] 'Commons Sitting of Friday, August 3, 1832', *Hansard*, vol.14, third series.
[22] 'A Political and Social Anomaly', *Monthly Repository* (September 1832), p.639.

because it represented a notable set-back in the drive towards a more egalitarian society. The lack of any sustained discussion on the matter before and after indicated also a fundamental lack of support for the belief in psycho-sexual equality, even amongst political radicals. The inclusion of 'Male' acted moreover not only to exclude women, but to encourage greater scrutiny of the nature of masculinity itself, acting with the new standardised property qualification to exclude a large proportion of the male population while simultaneously casting them as irresponsible and unfit.

The Standardised Property Qualification

In June 1832 the voter property qualification in the boroughs was standardised, with the intention ostensibly of introducing middle-class men to the electorate. All men owning property of £10 would qualify for the vote. However, boundary changes placed some £10 property owners outside borough constituencies and the variation in middle-class income, especially outside London, meant that many men who viewed themselves as middle-class failed to meet the property qualification. Speaking before the House of Commons in 1831, Captain Fizroy suggested that a £5 or £6 property qualification would be more reflective of middle-class variation and aspiration.[23] Not only did £10 appear cynical in its arbitrariness but for some it seemed to reward economic and material success over intellectual endeavour. Status and citizenship were conferred upon property rather than upon the 'property of skill'.[24] Any qualification, whether to vote or to stand as a representative, was as Godwin asserted in 1793 a sign that a man and his intellectual and moral worth, 'was less value than his property'.[25] This affected men not only of the working and artisanal classes but many heterodox radicals whose incomes might be reliant upon the fickle and precarious realms of writing and teaching. Young, impecunious and unmarried intellectuals and those who had no

[23] See 'Commons Sitting of Tuesday, August 30, 1831, *Hansard*, vol. 6, third series.
[24] See Anna Clark, 'The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language, and Class in the 1830s and 1840s', *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 1 (January, 1992), p.65.
[25] Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.359.

property of their own or who lodged fell into this arbitrary electoral no-man's land. Again, the *Repository* noted the discrepancy:

> A public writer takes no rank by his profession. It often subjects him to unworthy imputations. Now, if there be much, in the present arrangements of society, to sting the sturdy operative, much more must there be to goad and lacerate the sensitiveness of cultivated intelligence. The discontent (we use the word…in no bad sense) of this class must be of a deeper character. Their perceptions both of evil endured, and of good not realized, are of the keenest description. And what numbers there are who wholly or partially depend upon intellectual exertion for their pecuniary resources. How strong, of late, have been the stimulating influences to which they are subject. What a mass of mental vitality there is in this country. We must not estimate it by the production of epic poems or voluminous histories. Look rather at newspapers, periodicals, and the current literature of the day…The press is the fourth estate of the realm; but it is swamped by the other three, so far as affects the condition and prospects of its individual members.[26]

As the *Repository* implied, reform had acted to 'swamp' the radical elements of the 'fourth estate'. And it was largely within the 'fourth estate' that heterodox radicals existed. Moreover, it was an estate that attracted a large number of radical women, many of whom wrote not just out of interest and principle but to supplement already precarious household incomes. The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 would act as a further infringement upon certain male voters not only by excluding poor non-ratepayers but by excluding members of the migrant and itinerant workforce and those known as 'compounded householders', an administrative device, as Vernon points out, which allowed rates to be levied upon the owners of the property rather than the occupier, meaning that compounded householders were not on the burgess roll because they were not registered ratepayers. All helped, as

[26] 'The True Spirit of Reform', *Monthly Repository* (January 1835), p.2.

Vernon argues, to create an 'exclusive official definition of the propertied, male political subject'.[27]

Thus, the new property qualification succeeded in defining male citizenship not only as middle class, but implicitly as independent and married with a family. As McCormack so rightly points out, the project to define 'legitimate political participation' was as 'much concerned with exclusion as with inclusion'.[28] For Earl Grey, ownership of property worth £10 or more acted as a guarantee, demonstrating that a man held 'a certain station in life…' and that he would be 'for the most part' married and the father of a family.[29] Of course the majority of heterodox radical men were married with children but not all could be said to have been financially secure or independent; Godwin, Shelley and Coleridge are prime examples. As McCormack notes, parliamentary reformers, and we must add the majority of radicals also, drew 'upon long-established notions of political virtue and entitlement [that] hinged on the crucial notion of the independent man'.[30] Yet as Gleadle points out, independence implied, paradoxically, 'a voter anchored to domestic responsibilities'. 'Sexually-free' bachelors, lodgers, 'unburdened, impulsive' youths all served, Gleadle argues, as 'antonyms to the figure of the settled citizen'.[31] It might be argued that the heterodox 'androgynous' radical, both male and female, was in all things a social and political anomaly because *too* independent and *too* ambiguous.

But as scholars such as Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall and Tosh also observe, apparent within this new male citizen was the rise of a middle-class notion of domesticity based around a new breed of private and domesticated *pater familias*, which would become central to the Victorian era. For Tosh, the middle-class man who attained citizenship was deemed

[27] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p.29.
[28] McCormack, *Independent Man*, p.10.
[29] Earl Grey, *Hansard* (18 April, 1831), p.1478.
[30] McCormack, *Independent Man*, p.198.
[31] Kathryn Gleadle, 'Masculinity, Age and Life Cycle in the Age of Reform', *The Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust* (2017), p.33.

representative of a new hegemonic masculine ideal: he was mature, responsible and financially independent. Moreover, he was the bread-winner and patriarch of his own private and domestic idyll.[32] Dror Wahrman observes how the aftermath of the Reform Act in 1832 witnessed the 'proclamation of the "middle class" as the epitome of hearth and home, at the core of the "private"'.[33] Importantly, as Wahrman points out, this model of middle-class masculinity operated '*both* in private and in the public', linking the two spheres under its control.[34] What some scholars see emerging during the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820 in which male public honour was defined through chivalric protection of the weaker sex and the private sphere, would become increasingly part of the mainstream after 1832. Prior to this, Wahrman discerns little identification of the private sphere with the middle classes. Indeed, as demonstrated in the Queen Caroline Affair itself, the private sphere was more often than not identified with the effeminate and corrupt aristocracy. In contrast, and especially during the Queen Caroline Affair, the 'middle class', according to Wahrman was 'found relevant only to the composition of 'public opinion'; it was *not* found relevant to the discussion of the domestic issues at hand, and in particular was not a source for an alternative model of private/familial behaviour'.[35]

If there was any reordering of or interest in the private sphere, it was expressed on the whole by 'middling-class' heterodox radicals. It was they who were concerned with domestic issues and who wished to present an 'alternative model of private/familial behaviour'. Heterodox radicals with their limited access to the public sphere, especially prior to 1828, can be said to have presented the private and domestic sphere as the sphere of rational middle-class morality and as a natural mediator between the worst aspects of an effeminate aristocracy and

[32] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on gender, family and empire* (London, Pearson, 2005), p.63.
[33] Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, p.381.
[34] Ibid., p.378.
[35] Ibid., p.387.

a brutish lower class. Perhaps pointing to her own breed of radical intellectual, it was 'the middle rank', Wollstonecraft asserted, who contained the 'most virtue and abilities'.[36] In a comment that would appear to endorse the power and significance of this private and domestic sphere, Godwin argued that, 'it happens much oftener than we are willing to imagine, that "the post of honour", or, which is better, the post of utility, "is a private station"'.[37]

I do not wish to suggest, of course, that the 1832 Reform Act might single-handedly have created a new breed of man, or indeed woman. I do wish to suggest, however, that it provided a compelling and influential means of cementing a new middle-class masculine ideal and by endorsing what Tosh describes as the continuous and well-established 'exercise of private patriarchy'.[38] The decline of the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny might be viewed as the failure of the heterodox challenge to claim the heart of the middle-class private and domestic sphere. Where heterodox radicals had sought through the concept of the unsexed mind to erase sexual distinctions in the private and domestic sphere, hoping in the future to influence the development of public governance through that of private governance, evangelicals had sought, in varying degrees, to control the interaction between the private and public sphere by bringing both under the qualified guardianship of the father and head of household and by invoking the traditional biblical concept of the androgynous union of 'one flesh'. To appreciate this transformation and how a newly reformed Parliament after 1832 might have impeded the ability of heterodox radicals to hold on to the moral and spiritual ownership of the private and domestic sphere, I wish to consider next two pieces of legislation.

[36] Wollstonecraft, 'Rights of Woman', p.127.
[37] See Godwin, *Political Justice* (1793), p.463.
[38] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp.67,75.

The Act for Marriages in England 1836

As discussed in chapter four, from the 1780s, the 'marriage question' had been essentially a Unitarian concern. Yet, less than half a year after Parliament extended the franchise to middle-class voters, Fox noted the sudden broadening and strengthening of the 'Dissenting Marriage Question', with Trinitarian Dissenters entering the debate on marriage and religious conscience for the first time. In a controversial article published in the *Repository* in 1833, Fox used his position as editor to question the timing of the entry of Trinitarian dissent into what had hitherto been a largely Unitarian 'Marriage Question'. The loyalty of Unitarian and Trinitarian Dissenters had since 1813 been gradually acknowledged and rewarded by the repeal of religious and civil penalties. For many within this group, the extension of the franchise in 1832 was yet a further indication that the establishment believed them to be upstanding citizens. It was at this point, according to Fox, that the new responsible and independent Trinitarian Dissenter felt emboldened to call for reforms to marriage to which they had not previously objected. Fox was irritated by the fact that with a newly reformed Parliament and with 'the advantage of something approaching to a parliamentary pledge', middle-class Dissenters started to push an avowedly sectarian agenda instead of using their new found influence to press Parliament for grievances greater than those pertaining to matters of contested doctrine.[39] Fox's reaction is significant in that it serves to underpin the fundamental and growing differences between heterodox radicals and their increasingly conservative and more orthodox Dissenting peers. While radical calls for civil marriages and the legalisation of divorce might, prior to 1832, have threatened to undermine the long-held and long fought for sectarian interests of the broader Unitarian community, evidenced indeed by Dr Lushington's observations to the House of Commons in 1825,[40] the support of

[39] Fox, 'Dissenting Marriage Question', p.137.
[40] See p.210.

Trinitarian Dissent after 1832 can be said to have drowned out the voices of heterodox radicals within their midst.

In so far as the principles of conscience and 'controverted doctrine'[41] were concerned, the Marriage Act of 1836 could be deemed a relative success for Protestant Dissenters. Crucially, it allowed people to marry at their own place of worship, using their preferred liturgy and minister. It also, importantly, allowed civil ceremonies to be conducted in officially-recognised, unconsecrated buildings, which of course was a noted concession to those such as Fox. Yet, frustratingly for these, civil marriages were to remain under the control of the Anglican Church. As a contributor to the *Repository* pointed out on the eve of the Marriage Act in 1836, the granting of special licences, which would allow a couple to marry without bans and without the permission of their parents, would still be the preserve of the Archbishop of Canterbury and no such licences would be awarded to those who wanted a civil marriage. This 'invidious distinction', the author argued, demonstrated that in England the act of marriage, and the laws and practices surrounding it, were still subservient to the moral and spiritual authority of religion.[42] And nowhere was this strange anomaly more apparent than in the matter of divorce. Despite the legality of civil marriages, divorce remained illegal. As Fox had asserted in his earlier article on the dissenting marriage question, 'a civil contract, not dissoluble when its dissolution is required by the interests of the contracting parties and of the community, would be a strange anomaly.'[43] Divorce would continue to be denied, even for couples who had contracted a civil marriage, on the grounds that it was a sacred and solemn vow. And on matters pertaining to the broader and more profound issue of psycho-sexual equality, the Act was silent. The sexual double standard was maintained. If Dissenting issues of conscience and principle had been addressed, the broader iniquitous practices and customs that were ring-fenced by a still solemn vow of marriage had

[41] Fox, 'Dissenting Marriage Question', p.137.
[42] 'The New Marriage Bill', *Monthly Repository* (January 1836), p.185.
[43] Fox, 'Dissenting Marriage Question', p.141

not. While, prior to 1832, the heterodox voices of Worsley, Disney and Fox might have been able to maintain some presence in a still marginal Unitarian 'Dissenting Marriage Question', the uniting of the various middle-class Dissenting denominations after 1832 meant that heterodox calls for marriage to be made a civil contract between equal parties – the vow of obedience being omitted - with the right to divorce on the grounds of 'no-blame' incompatibility, would appear to have been completely ignored. Male middle-class Dissenters – Trinitarian and Unitarian - might be said to have proved their loyalty to the orthodox beliefs of the establishment once again by limiting the voice of heterodox radicalism within their ranks.

As discussed in chapter four, for the majority of Rational Dissenters and their more orthodox Dissenting peers – women included - sexual equality in marriage, as elsewhere, was simply not a contested or reforming issue. In a letter to the American Unitarian minister, William Channing (1780-1842) in April 1832, Aikin pointed to the overwhelming lack of interest on the matter of female emancipation, referring to the thoughts of the co-founder of the Unitarian Society in Calcutta, Ram Mohan Roy (c.1774-1833) who had been justly scandalised at the want of zeal for the reform bill amongst ladies. 'Oh! that I could raise a prevailing voice against the manners, the maxims, the habits by which I see [my sex] fettered and debased!', Aikin exclaimed.[44] The 1836 Marriage Act would do little to remedy this. That the number of people choosing a civil ceremony remained extremely low right up to the 1960s would suggest that for the majority, whether through belief or through social pressure, preference for the religious ceremony continued across society, as did, by association, the endorsement of the sexual double standard implicit in the orthodox biblical understanding of the androgynous 'one flesh' and the broad rejection of divorce.[45]

[44] Aikin, *Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters*, pp.258-259
[45] For details on civil marriage after 1836 see Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice*, pp.337-338.

The New Poor Law 1834

While the Marriage Act and the debate surrounding it can be said to have impinged seriously on heterodox hopes for progressive domestic reform, the heterodox 'critique' of conventional marriage practices and in particular that promoted by Owenites who advocated free love, communal living and birth control, had, according to Clark, already been inhibited by the passing of the New Poor Law two years previously in 1834.[46]

Unlike the old Poor Law which had assumed at least a minimal right to relief, offering bread and a few shillings, enough to keep a family in their home, the Poor Law Amendment Act rejected this principle.[47] To deter the undeserving poor, outdoor relief was banned and help was confined entirely to indoor relief in the form of the workhouse in which husbands were separated from their wives and children from their parents. The principles of Malthus were everywhere present with loose morals and 'improvident marriages' blamed for overpopulation and poverty. Many saw the new Poor Law not only as a deterrent to pauperism and dependency but as a means to preventing the poor from marrying and having children in the first place.[48] It was a slur on the sexual morals of the working class and as such could be blamed in part for an increasingly gendered discourse that started to emerge.

The heterodox critique on marriage and its advocacy of divorce, promoted by those such as Godwin, Owen, Fox and Linton – admittedly most critics were men - sought to alleviate the wrongs done to women. However, as Clark asserts, the New Poor Law put the working class and women in particular who had initially shown interest in the egalitarian principle of psycho-sexual equality, on the defensive. The doctrine of free love and the advocacy of divorce gave little protection to women who were already vulnerable to desertion by lovers

[46] Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.187.
[47] Ibid., p.187.
[48] See Ibid., pp.187-188.

and husbands.[49] But why should this be important to a heterodox concept whose main base of support hailed from amongst the comparatively better-off intelligentsia? A potential cause might be found in the growing working-class and Chartist identity of Owenite socialism and its initial endorsement of psycho-sexual equality and its eventual decline. While working-class men, as Clark argues, feared that the new law would emasculate them; women in contrast worried that excessive and sustained labouring outside the home would have a masculinising affect.[50] Heterodox radicals who opposed the 'bitter privations' of the New Poor Law and in particular the bastardy clause found themselves in a difficult position. It became all but impossible to defend the morality of the working class and promote the principles of free love and divorce seemingly enshrined in the concept of psychological androgyny.[51] As Clark observes, forced to defend their integrity as parents and spouses, the New Poor Law impelled the working class to 'uphold conventional morality'.[52]

The effects of reforms after 1832 upon the heterodox radical concept of psychological androgyny are perhaps most apparent on the largest group to have supported the notion of psycho-sexual equality. In her close study of Owenism, Taylor notes that faith in the cooperative perfectibility of the human condition had been in decline from the late 1820s, due in large part to the effects of industrial expansion and the competitive economic forces of capitalism in which men and women, certainly of the lower classes, found themselves competing for work within 'old and new industries'.[53] Taylor refers to the 'hardening line of sexual apartheid which emerged within the most "respectable" strata of the working class in the 1830s and 1840s', not she argues through emulation of the middle classes but as a result of fundamental changes that occurred in the 'wake of the Industrial Revolution'. This sexual

[49] Ibid., p.187.
[50] Ibid., p.190.
[51] See Ibid., p.187.
[52] Ibid., p.195.
[53] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.261-264.

division within the working class, Taylor argues, had its roots not at the point of Owenite decline but within the Owenite period itself.[54] Although such change was complex and varied from region to region, the cumulative effect was the 'creation of a sense of sexual crisis' that was noted 'in all the popular movements of the period, including Owenism and Chartism'.[55] It can be argued that after 1832 and with laws that seemed to infringe ever more upon working-class culture and rights, the symbol of psycho-sexual equality present in the core principles of Owenism held little appeal to a male workforce who felt its masculinity increasingly undermined and to a female workforce who felt that their natural roles as wives and mothers were being degraded and unsexed, to use the pejorative meaning of the word.

With regards Chartism, in 1838 women were excluded from the *People's Charter*, indicating a marked shift in attitudes away from the more egalitarian ideas held initially. Heterodox radicals, such as Fox, Linton and Barmby were highly critical of the gendered definition of equality and universal rights presented in the *People's Charter*.[56] In 1839, calling for the equality of men and women, Linton condemned the 'absurd and fatal prejudices' existing between men and women that had created 'an opposition of aims instead of confirming the natural identity of their interests.'[57] In 1842, the Barmbys published a 'Declaration in Favour of Electoral Reform' in their communist paper, the *Promethean; or Communitarian Apostle*. Pointing to the negative evolution of the Chartist Movement Barmby wrote that he and his fellow communitarians would 'stand or fall' by their calls for 'unsexual Chartism' and the suffrage of men and women. They would not deviate from their original purpose. Nor could they turn a blind eye to the 'narrow way' in which electoral reform had since been supported and 'the half of humanity…little regarded in the People's Charter.'[58] Yet, the criticisms of

[54] Ibid., p.264.
[55] Ibid., p.264.
[56] Thompson, *Outsiders*, p.79.
[57] Linton, 'The Right of Woman', p.139.
[58] Barmby, 'Declaration in Favour of Electoral Reform', *Promethean; or, Communitarian Apostle* 1, no. 1 (January 1842), p.14.

Barmby and Linton were ignored. And perhaps as evidence of the lack of support for such egalitarian 'unsexual' ideas, five months after it was founded, Barmby's *Promethean* closed. It would appear that the belief in psycho-sexual equality simply did not chime with the increasingly gendered and divisive political spirit of the times. Barmby's 'equilibriated' and androgynous image of the 'Woman-Man-Power' lacked political and, it would seem, social appeal.

By the mid-1840s, women had been pushed out of the formal organization of Chartism, with the rules of the National Chartist Association in 1843 classing political agents as 'males' instead of 'persons'.[59] A woman using the pen name, 'Vita', protested that women should 'withdraw from a movement from which an improvement of their status was not to be expected'.[60] Nor was Vita alone in such thoughts. Criticising male Chartists for rejecting female claims to suffrage for fear of prejudicing their own and accusing liberal politicians in the House of Commons for 'the want of any real respect for woman', Fox suggested that women would be better off entrusting their interests to their own keeping.[61] Within Owenism itself, by the late 1840s the ideas that had made up its grand utopian ideology had, as Taylor argues, also broken into separate channels: 'trade unionism, practical co-operation, social science, spiritualism, freethought…and the new women's movement itself'.[62] The Owenite paper, the *Crisis*, offers interesting insights into the divisive nature of political reform after 1832 and to the growing ideological divisions within the group itself. Prior to the passing of the Reform Act in June 1832, the *Crisis* published a communitarian manifesto, full of the guiding principles of socialism and its 'New System of Society', calling for men and women to be treated as equals.[63] By May of 1834, perhaps with the growing influence of working-

[59] Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.245.
[60] Ibid., p.245.
[61] Richard Garnett, *The Life of W.J. Fox* (London, John Lane, 1910), p.274.
[62] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.263.
[63] *Crisis* (May 26, 1832), p.39.

class Chartists, talk of equal rights and universal suffrage for men and women had become, it would appear, talk of universal suffrage for the brotherhood of men, based on the productivity and skill of 'tradesmen, producers and distributors of wealth'. The author of the article noted that 'no one ever proposes to give the women the vote.' Universal suffrage represented the unity of men as equals in nature, '…entitled to support and education, and a proportionate share of authority, without which there can be no liberty…'[64] Growing numbers of letters published in the *Crisis* from 1834 were also concerned with the prejudices against women and the differences between the sexes. Alluding to this division and to the suspicion that sexual division had been a conscious hope in the minds of those who had drafted reform in 1832, a female correspondent under the pen name of 'Philia' wrote that:

> The cunning of the ruling party has been able to stifle the ardent passion of liberty in man's breast, only by administering to one still more imperious of his mere animal nature, the love of domination. To this appetite (for it has nothing to do with reason or reflection) our barbarous rulers have sacrificed half the human race! Woman was thrown a sop to the chained and howling human curs, who took the bribe, resigned their birth-right, liberty, and became appeased by sharing with their oppressors the privilege of oppressing!![65]

By the mid to late 1830s, we can see in the words of Grimstone and Catherine Barmby a move towards a more gender-specific stance and a tentative move away from Barbauld's more effusive opinion that 'different sentiments and different connections' separated women much more than the 'joint interest of their sex' united them.[66] In her 'Appeal to Woman' published in the *New Moral World* in 1835, some ten years before Fox would suggest the same, Barmby thanked the 'few enlightened men' for their help, but called for the 'whole of the [female] sex' to unite 'in the bonds of unity and love', perhaps acknowledging the change

[64] See *Crisis* (May 4, 1834), pp.49-51.
[65] *Crisis* (April 5, 1834), p.258.
[66] See, p.202.

in spirit amongst socialist and working-class communities and acknowledging the decline of what Barmby would six years later describe with something approaching fanatical optimism, the 'Woman-Man-Power'.[67] While the some of the more practical ideas of heterodox radicals might appear, as Clare Midgley notes, to have provided the 'foundations for the reformist women's movement that emerged in the 1850s',[68] the concept of the unsexed mind and psycho-sexual equality would become a point of contention amongst radical women whose interests appeared increasingly to lie not in androgynous equality but in what Rendall describes as the 'equality of difference', which itself might be viewed as embracing an older and more traditional notion of androgyny based on sexual complementarity.[69] There is a sense of mounting frustration and disillusionment in the words of heterodox radicals such as Aikin, Fox, Linton and the Barmbys.[70]

Yet, perhaps this is hardly surprising. Belief in psycho-sexual equality had always been marginal. If we consider political radicals from the 1790s onwards, there were few who advocated universal male/female suffrage. The bookseller, Thomas Spence (1750-1814), the poet George Dyer (1755-1841), the radical known as 'Calidore', and Carlile were unusual. With the exception perhaps of Carlile, however, the notion of male/female equality evoked by these radicals was essentially gendered. In his 'declaration of rights' published in 1803, Spence asserted that while women deserved the vote and the right to legal protection, their bodily weakness should exempt and 'deny' them access to positions of political responsibility and to the onerous public domain of work.[71] According to Clark, Spence's motivation in championing female rights and the feminine spirit in politics may well have been 'to goad

[67] Catherine Barmby (Kate), 'An Appeal to Woman', *New Moral World* (February 7, 1835), p.343.
[68] Clare Midgley, 'Women, religion and reform', in Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (eds.), *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London, Routledge, 2010), p.141.
[69] Ibid., pp.150-151; Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860* (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1985), p.3.
[70] Linton, 'The Right of Woman', pp.138-139
[71] Thomas Spence, 'Something to the Purpose: A Receipt to make a Millenium or Happy World. Being Extracts from the Constitution of Spensonia' (London, 1803).

apathetic men into activism'.[72] 'Feminine' was used, as Chernock observes, 'as a metonym for all reformist goals', suggesting that the inclusion of women in politics was viewed as an 'abstract' ideal rather than a 'concrete, and unquestionably messier, form'.[73] It was perhaps this abstract spirit that was adopted by early Chartists. As Gleadle notes, although some Chartists such as William Lovett (1800-1877) professed support for female suffrage and were disappointed when it was dropped from the *Charter* in 1838, the attitude towards the role of women was on the whole inherently conservative, with many believing the true place of women to be in the home.[74] So, while Chernock argues that Spence, 'Calidore' and Dyer were keen to galvanise a feminine spirit or sensibility which would 'work tirelessly to promote justice, humanity and equality', she points out that their ideas were nonetheless based upon an 'essentialist notion of sexual difference'.[75] The issue of 'form equals function' was very much present amongst political and working-class radicals and would explain why the heterodox radical concept of psycho-sexual equality failed to challenge the emerging and competing doctrine of separate spheres. What is more, this growing gender essentialism was not held by men alone but by women as well. Indeed, at a time when men and women were beginning to seek acknowledgement of and support for their own specific needs, the concept of psycho-sexual equality would appear to have invoked images not of social parity and unity but of sexual inversion and weakness; an image of the hermaphroditical and vitiated 'effeminatus'.[76]

[72] Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.149.
[73] Chernock, *Men and British Feminism*, pp.123-124.
[74] Gleadle, *Early Feminists*, pp.88-90
[75] Chernock, *Men and British Feminism*, p.125.
[76] See Dowling, *Hellenism & Homosexuality*, p.8.

The Spectre of the Hermaphrodite

After 1832, masculinity was politicised in a way, arguably, it had not been before and the notion of sexual difference was complicated by the tacit application of gender as something beyond the simple polarities of biology and anatomy. The process had taken longer but Parliament had done precisely what the French Assembly had done in 1792; it had sexed the concept of citizenship. The crucial difference between England and France was that the latter's legislative definition of citizenship was based more or less on a clear and simple biological distinction – men could vote; women could not. In comparison, England's policy from 1832 of virtual suffrage for the majority of men and all women, meant that suffrage became an issue not only of biological sex but of subtle and increasingly discriminatory definitions of non-biological, psychological gender. The growing and lurid fascination with, and fear of, effeminacy and hermaphroditism, from the mid-eighteenth century in England, was in some respects legislated for in June 1832 by denying certain types of unfit men the vote.

While the image of the hermaphrodite as a symbol of effeminacy had been used freely by middle and upper-class conservatives to attack the egalitarian ideas of heterodox radicals and by heterodox radicals to attack the effeminacy of the upper classes, it was employed increasingly after 1832 by those defending the rights of working men in order to highlight the involuntary sexual inversion of male and female factory operatives. Taylor refers to a radical article published in the *Northern Star* in 1849, written by the Chartist Thomas Wheeler, who described the husbands of factory women as 'that crowd of women-men, inverting the order of Nature, and performing a mother's duties'.[77] Was Wheeler aware of Barmby's earlier definition of sexual equilibrium? It is impossible to say without further study, but the hermaphroditical reference to 'women-men' and the use of 'women-men' as opposed to

[77] See Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.238.

'men-women', would suggest a passing familiarity. In 1845 in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the German philosopher Friedrich Engels blamed the factory system for turning men into virtual 'eunuchs'.[78] And within Chartism itself, physical-force Chartists started to use the language of sexual difference and inversion to mock moral-force Chartists as 'old women', and in one instance, according to Clark, describing the editor of the *Charter* newspaper as a 'dandy cockney politician'.[79] The parallel between this and the attack on Hunt by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1822 is notable. The unstable nature of the concept of androgyny is more than apparent.

The Saint-Simonians and the Hardening of Sexual Division

When the Saint-Simonians first visited England in the early 1830s, their egalitarian and progressive ideas appealed to heterodox radicals such as Mill and Fox. As Nicholas Capaldi notes, the concern of the Saint-Simonians for poverty; 'their recognition of meritocracy, their support of the emancipation of women, and the importance they attributed to cultural leadership', were issues of great significance for heterodox radicals such as Mill.[80] In an article on the French political and economic theorist, Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and his followers, published in the conservative *Quarterly Review* in 1831, Robert Southey was able to shed some light upon its initial appeal, explaining that 'disciples' were attracted to 'a new science, a science as positive as any which has obtained that title; it is the Science of the Human Race, and the method employed in it is the same as is followed in astronomy and in physic, that of classing facts, and arranging them by generalization and particularization'; methods that were likewise attracting heterodox radicals to the new disciplines of anthropology, physiology and phrenology. We can see how Saint-Simonianism initially might have appealed to the desire for truth and practical change. Southey referred to the

[78] See Ibid., p.238.
[79] Ibid., p.225.
[80] Nicholas Capaldi, *John Stuart Mill: A Biography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.80.

progressive and evolutionary law of human perfectibility[81] and to the egalitarian ideology, which while advocating the continuance of marriage between one man and one woman, insisted that '"the wife ought to be equal with the husband, and that, according to the peculiar grace which God has conferred upon her sex, she ought to be associated with him in the exercise of the triple functions of the church, the state, and the family'. In a direct reference to Plato's *Symposium,* Southey described how Saint-Simon conceived of the '*social individual,* which has hitherto been the *man* alone', as henceforth, '"the *man and wife*," presenting politically thus the perfect Androgyne of philosophical fable'.[82] In a footnote, Southey quoted from the French the influence of Platonism upon the androgynous idea.[83]

But Southey was no supporter of the Saint-Simonians or their English supporters and went on to explain that the new science was merely a cover for atheism. In a less than veiled dig at the heterodox radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent, Southey argued that Saint-Simonianism was 'a profession which requires no larger measure of belief than an ultra-Unitarian's, - the minimum of faith'.[84] Referring implicitly perhaps to the influence of a revivified Platonism amongst 'ultra-Unitarians', such as Fox and the ex-ultra-Unitarian, Coleridge, Southey wrote that 'the age to which the heathen philosopher looked forward, and in which all things are to be made known, has commenced, according to these new apostles'.[85] As a founding member of the Pantisocratic Society along with Coleridge, Southey was well-aware that underpinning the philosophy of this theoretical egalitarian community was the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny. With a relationship that never really recovered from the break-up of the Pantisocratic Society and the suggestion by some that Southey had used something approaching emotional blackmail to encourage Coleridge to

[81] Robert Southey, 'Doctrine de Saint Simon', *Quarterly Review* (July 1831), p.431.
[82] Ibid., p.443.
[83] Ibid., p.439.
[84] Ibid., p.430.
[85] Ibid., p.430.

marry Sara Fricker,[86] it is possible to see in his critique of Saint-Simonianism veiled criticism of Coleridge himself and of the ideas and philosophy pursued by the poet and his circle of friends and associates.

Yet by 1831 - the year Southey published his article - women had already been dismissed from the 'hierarchy' of Saint-Simonianism and the movement had, according to Evelyn Forget, taken on a far less egalitarian form.[87] By 1833, the Saint-Simonians had embraced the mysticism of female messianism.[88] While they retained their fundamental belief in the spiritual and 'theoretical' equality of men and women, their belief in the centrality of the married couple as a social unit held a quite rigid and 'ideal' understanding of male and female characteristics. However, until the new society was created, women, with their 'God-given nature', were to be protected from the hardening corruption of the old world and therefore excluded from public life. The new society when it emerged would however be based on stereotypical and biblical ideas of the marriage of ideal male and female virtues and roles.[89] The image of androgyny adopted by the Saint-Simonians from 1831 would appear to be that of the patriarchal biblical interpretation, similar indeed to the noticeably gendered principles of 'analogy and polarity' elaborated by the former Owenite and editor of Owen's socialist paper the *Crisis*, James 'Shepherd' Smith (1801-1857), in his 'Doctrine of the Woman' published in a series of ten articles in his journal the *Shepherd* between 1834 and 1835. As J.F.C. Harrison notes, Smith's ideas would appear indicative of a growing distinction between a more mystical and Christianised model of sexual complementarity which became increasingly predominant amongst radical socialist groups from the 1830s as these initially egalitarian groups were 'modified' by growing numbers of the working class

[86] See Beer, 'Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834)'.
[87] Evelyn L. Forget, 'Saint-Simonian Feminism', *Feminist Economics* 7, No., 1 (2001), p.88.
[88] See Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.168-169.
[89] Forget, 'Saint-Simonian Feminism', p.85.

who swelled their ranks and by the emerging trade union movement.[90] If we compare the notion of androgyny that would inspire Barmby in the 1840s, there is a marked difference. If imbued with an element of spiritual mysticism, much like the ideas of Shelley, for Barmby, the individual rather than the couple was androgynous. Wollstonecraft and Shelley were raised aloft by Barmby as examples of the 'equilibriated' 'Woman-Man-Power'. If Barmby was inspired initially by the ideas promoted by Smith, the Southcottians and the Saint-Simonians, their increasingly gendered and stereotypical interpretations of androgyny deviated from that promoted by Barmby. For Barmby, male and female characteristics were 'equilibriated' within the one individual, and no one 'power' was ascendant over the other.[91] Nor was the 'Messiah-spirit' female but, like the original cosmological androgyne, a mix of the two.[92] Barmby was critical of those, such as Southcott and Smith, who sought to sex the messiah.[93] Indeed, as Taylor points out, in what would appear to have been a thinly-veiled criticism of the Southcottians, Barmby refuted the idea of a female messiah or 'the reign of women upon earth', arguing that if the 'man-power' was in retreat, it did not mean that it should now be subjugated.[94] There was to be no violence, no shaming, no retribution, but equilibrium. Ending his article on an androgynous botanical note, Barmby likened the new age of 'total perfection' to the flower attaining its 'botanic anthesis', which referred to the period in which a flower was fully open and fully functional.[95] Inspired increasingly, as Taylor notes, by the ideas of Shelley and Wollstonecraft, Barmby's interpretation of the androgynous 'Woman-Man-Power' is in keeping with the Platonised interpretation promoted by earlier heterodox radicals. Saint-Simonian ideas on separate spheres and the segregation of gendered roles might in fact be compared with those promoted by radicals such as Spence

[90] See J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: The Quest for the New Moral World* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.209-216.
[91] Barmby, 'The Woman-Man-Power', p.269.
[92] See Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.178-179; Barmby, 'The Woman-Man-Power', p.269.
[93] Barmby, 'The Woman-Man-Power', p.269.
[94] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.164.
[95] Barmby, 'The Woman-Man-Power', p.269.

and before him, Priestley. As Capaldi notes, by 1832, this growing conservatism had led to the fracturing of Saint-Simonianism, with heterodox figures such as Mill in England disassociating themselves.[96]

Conclusion

Investigating the presence of androgyny in heterodox radical discourse both before and after 1832 reveals intriguing suggestions of a conflict between two competing, if occasionally overlapping, interpretations of androgyny: one philosophical, egalitarian and heterodox; the other more biblical, patriarchal and evangelical. For a short while the heterodox interpretation might be said to have gained some ground, challenging orthodox interpretations of sexual excellence, especially amongst those of the working class attracted to Owenite socialism. By the mid to late 1830s however, it would seem that the Platonised interpretation of psycho-sexual equality, inspired by the levelling prospects of progressive evolution, had slipped back. What might be described as the androgynous doctrine of separate spheres that had initially, according to Davidoff and Hall, been linked to evangelicalism, had by the 1830s and 1840s, 'become the common sense of the English middle class'.[97] And what was viewed initially as the common sense of the middle class rapidly became that of society in general. [98] And with a second revolution in France in 1830, and continuing unrest across the British Isles, it is perhaps easy to see why the androgynous symbol of separate spheres as the guardian of social order and stability should have succeeded. While the Great Reform Act in 1832 cannot be said to have sounded the death knell for the Platonised interpretation of androgyny it can be argued that it helped through the more middle-class nature of Parliament to endorse over time the biblical and patriarchal interpretation of androgyny. From the lowest to the highest echelons, including the monarchy, society would come increasingly to

[96] Capaldi, *John Stuart Mill*, pp.80-81.
[97] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p.149.
[98] Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.195.

endorse this orthodox and patriarchal interpretation of the marital union of sexual opposites and separate spheres.

Conclusion

In examining the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny adopted by heterodox radicals on the margins of Rational Dissent in England between the 1790s and the 1840s, this thesis reveals a relative lacuna in the historiography. In histories of England from the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth centuries, the concept of psychological androgyny or the unsexed mind remains a topic of peripheral interest at best. Aside from scholars of sociology and psychoanalysis, whose interests tend to lie with physical androgyny or intersex conditions, the study of the concept of psychological androgyny in England remains one studied largely by literary scholars and by literary scholars of Romanticism in particular. In such studies, focus tends to be trained upon a highly selective collection of texts from a small group or canon of Romantic poets and novelists, most notably Shelley and Coleridge. The broader socio-political and religious context is overlooked as are a number of significant less 'Romantic' exponents. With political objectives in mind, the feminist critiques of the 1970s and 1980s have provided a rather skewed and overly critical assessment of the concept. Conscious of attempts to promote androgyny in the late twentieth century, feminist critics looked to the Romantic era for evidence of its defects. Androgyny did not represent equality but merely another means of subsuming the feminine within the masculine. While not wishing to ignore the problems and limitations encountered by a concept which seeks to transcend sexual difference, it has been the aim of this thesis to judge the objectives of the exponents of the unsexed mind in the context of the period in which they lived. It has been the aim of this thesis, in the light of more recent positive scholarship and with a more interdisciplinary approach, not only to expand the study of androgyny beyond the confines of literary texts but to reassess and redefine the concept as something that emerged within and as a result of the peculiar experiences and idiosyncrasies, not of Romantic poets, but of a

network of English heterodox radicals gathered on the margins of an increasingly conservative Rational Dissent from the 1790s

Taylor and more recent literary scholars such as Bannet and Newlyn have all rightly recognised the existence of the concept of psychological androgyny.[1] However, their focus is trained upon individual people, issues or events, such as Barbauld, emerging types of feminism, Owenite socialism or the increasingly masculinist rhetoric of working-class Chartism. What they are not focused upon, understandably, is a concept with links to and between them all. Hence, references to the presence of psychological androgyny are made in passing or indirectly. By focusing our attention upon the concept itself and its use and influence, we begin to note the broader connections, motivations and sympathies between figures such as Coleridge, Shelley, Wollstonecraft, Godwin, Barbauld, Worsley, Fox, Darwin and the Barmbys. Examining the Platonised interpretation of psychological androgyny reveals in some respects a new type of radicalism, distinct from the political radicalism of Burdett, Cobbett and even Spence and distinct also from the religious radicalism of Rational Dissenters such as Priestley, all of whom continued to believe there to be a 'foundation in nature' for sexual difference and sexual hierarchy.

While acknowledging Doan's caveat of relinquishing useful if anachronistic categories,[2] a decision was made to avoid labels such as 'radical Dissenter' or 'feminist'. The category of 'feminist' in particular has led to some who supported the notion of psychological androgyny being labelled at times problematically as misogynists or anti-feminists. Prior to the emergence of taxonomies of sex in the late nineteenth century and to 'feminism' as a recognised term in the twentieth century, such labels can serve rather to create artificial or inaccurate divisions, obscuring more complicated collaborative undertakings. We risk

[1] See Bannet, *Domestic Revolution*, p.82; Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.178-180; Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, pp.156-158.
[2] Doan, *Disturbing Practices*, pp. 100–101.

underestimating the importance of this radical concept if we treat it as something synonymous with feminism and the early women's movement rather than as an idea used to advance the humanist principles of rational progress and perfectibility in both sexes. While I do not wish to deny that the plight of women was not important, or that male members of this radical network did not write often in defence of women's rights, it was but one element of a far larger campaign or drive for human and social improvement.

Although no label is ever truly comprehensive, 'heterodox radicals' helps to identify a network of people whose belief in the essential androgyneity and perfectibility of the human mind lead increasingly to their marginalisation not only on the fringes of Rational Dissent but on the fringes of a society whose ideas on sexual difference were increasingly conservative. 'Heterodox' also helps to distinguish a network of radicals whose concerns for peaceful private and domestic reform deviated increasingly from the more aggressive public policies of political radicals, whose concerns lay overwhelmingly with parliamentary reform and suffrage.

Heterodox Radicals and Rational Dissent

Distinguishing heterodox radicals from the generality of their contemporaries, including religious and political radicals, has been important. Drawing on revisionist scholarship on Rational Dissent and the radicalism within it, this thesis has focused upon an increasingly marginalised 'social substratum'[3] on the fringes of Rational Dissent, as discerned by Philp, that emerged in the 1790s and continued into the 1830 and 1840s but who were exercised by private and domestic concerns more so than public. Rather than dwelling purely upon the concept of androgyny within this small group, where appropriate their ideas and objectives have been compared with those of others within and outside Rational Dissent. In doing so, this thesis has revealed a quite subtle and often overlooked distinction between what would

[3] Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism', p.43.

appear to have been two competing interpretations of androgyny; one egalitarian in essence; the other patriarchal. Although many heterodox radicals hailed from within the middle class, Philp is right to argue that defining them by class has the potential to mislead; heterodox radicals hailed from across the social spectrum. Yet, Neale's definition of a 'middling class'[4] is helpful in defining a network of radical individuals whose political and religious affiliations, occupations and of course sex were defined by strict limits upon civic and political agency and by financial vulnerability.

Denied access to the more conventional modes of political expression for much of the period in question and certainly before the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, heterodox radicals trained their sights upon the private and domestic sphere, believing that critical reforms to education and marriage, the two great bastions of patriarchal hegemony and inequality, would generate an evolutionary knock-on effect, leading to peaceful and effective reforms eventually to the public sphere, liberating men and women from false and arbitrary notions of sexual difference. Appreciating this private orientation and the importance of human perfectibility in heterodox radicalism serves in part to explain why a group of people who were on the whole anti-democratic, should believe in a concept that was in essence egalitarian. It is perhaps for such reasons, that the socio-political impact of the concept of psychological androgyny has been so neglected in the historiography and especially by histories of radicalism. This thesis has argued that underpinning these radical objectives was a resurgent and revivified Platonism.

The Platonised Interpretation of Androgyny

Platonism was to all intents and purposes an unpopular philosophy in England at this time. However, it has been argued that this unpopularity was to a degree fuelled by its growing popularity amongst heterodox radicals. Appreciating the influence of a revivified Platonism

[4] Neale, *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century*, p.124.

upon heterodox radicalism is important, not only in understanding the increasingly marginalised position of this radical network but in identifying the critical points of departure between its Platonised interpretation of androgyny and a more biblical interpretation endorsed by the generality of society, political and religious radicals included. By returning to Plato in the Greek rather than relying solely upon Latin translations, heterodox radicals were able to discern a more egalitarian, practical, earthly and less mystical nature to the ancient Philosopher's ideas. In particular, they were drawn to Plato's controversial dialogue on love and friendship, the *Symposium*, and its tale of the androgynous origins of humankind. Alongside a vigorous interrogation of scripture, advances within the human sciences which seemed for some to demonstrate a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of human nature, a return to Plato's more egalitarian ideas helped heterodox radicals to challenge the credibility of patriarchy and sexual difference enshrined in the Bible and in law. Though undoubtedly the product of a genius, Shelley's idiosyncratic translation of the *Symposium* is viewed here as a reflection of this challenge and of the influence of a revivified Platonism upon this heterodox network and of the vital exchange and transmission of ideas within this group. The broad familiarity with Plato's works across this group might offer a partial explanation as to why references to the concept of androgyny remained largely implicit, although the reputation of Plato as a 'misleader of youth'[5] and anxiety over potential and actual accusations of effeminacy and sexual inversion were undoubtedly contributing factors.

In defining the heterodox radical interpretation of androgyny as Platonised, this thesis discerns a critical distinction between an androgyny based on the rounded development of the individual, and a Judeo-Christian interpretation of androgyny as something necessitated by the meeting or marriage of sexual opposites, underpinned by the doctrine of separate spheres. This helps to make sense of the marginal nature of those who supported the unsexed mind

[5] Peacock, *Crotchet Castle*, p.134.

and too of the ways in which domestic and private interests between heterodox radicals and evangelicals in particular seemed so often to overlap.

German influence

To appreciate the radical peculiarities of the heterodox interpretation of psychological androgyny it is important to recognise the influence of German ideas. In discerning a continued and growing influence upon heterodox radicals in England, this thesis challenges arguments by scholars such as Ashton that German influence across England had by the turn of the nineteenth century all but disappeared. Closer inspection of radical journals such as the *Monthly Magazine* and the *Monthly Repository* indicate that amongst heterodox radicals, German ideas and methods, most especially in biblical analysis, continued to excite and to influence, leading some such as the *Anti-Jacobin Review* to suspect that German ideas posed a greater threat to social stability than the revolutionary armies of France. Again, scholarly focus on literary genres has presented a rather skewed image of German influence. While Himmelfarb and Ashton are of course right to discern a growing insularity and a steep decline in English interest of foreign and particularly German ideas from the turn of the nineteenth century,[6] this picture of broad popular decline is not apparent amongst heterodox radicals. Studies that focus upon the declining popularity of German plays and novels naturally overlook evidence of the growing influence that advances in German science, theology and philosophy had upon English heterodox radicals and most notably upon notions such as the unsexed mind. Most notable amongst these advances was the influence of a resurgent German-led Platonism. German institutions such as Jena, Göttingen and Berlin and their professors were at the forefront of advances in methods of critical analysis, theological exegesis and the natural and human sciences. The relative freedom with which German students were able to enter into theological disputes and to challenge religious belief systems

[6] Himmelfarb, *Marriage and Morals*, p.xi; Ashton, *German Idea*, p.4.

based on discoveries in the sciences was liberating for English heterodox radicals who lived in a country where the control of Anglicanism and religious segregation actively discouraged any such cross-denominational or cultural debate or collaboration. The influence upon heterodox radicalism of figures such as Kant, Blumenbach, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Schelling and even Schlegel, cannot be ignored. This is not to argue that literary figures such as Goethe and Schiller were not also important but that studies that focus upon these to the exclusion of others, present a partial image of German influence. Advances in German science, philosophy and theology cannot be ignored when considering the peculiar development and direction of the more egalitarian heterodox interpretation of androgyny and its evolutionary theory of human perfectibility in England.

Education

Inspired by these German-led advances, the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny was present in emerging heterodox theories of mental perfectibility that, while influenced by earlier associationist ideas developed by Locke and Hartley, moved beyond these rejecting arguments for expediency and sexual difference. The influence of the Platonic theory of mental flexibility raised in the discussion between Socrates and Diotima in the *Symposium*, and too in the influence of the Socratic Method of conversation in learning, might be viewed in the debate on coeducation and emulation and in the development of noticeably more gender-neutral curriculums and teaching environments amongst heterodox radicals. Such ideas and methods are present in the pedagogical literature published by Barbauld, Aikin and Godwin.

Closer examination of the methods and curriculums employed by heterodox radical educationalists allows us also to note the sometimes subtle differences between these and evangelical educationalists such as More. Recent scholarship on the educational practices and beliefs of Barbauld and More helps to reveal not only the ways in which the educational

theories of heterodox radicals and more conservative evangelicals overlapped but the subtle and often overlooked degree to which these diverged. Nowhere is this perhaps more apparent than in the gendered objectives of educational reform. Chapter three explored how reformers of education, radicals and evangelicals alike, may have competed for moral and intellectual control of education in the domestic and private sphere through their respective interpretations of psychological androgyny. While both radicals and evangelicals agreed that the intellectual and moral improvement of both sexes was paramount, evangelicals such as More were clear that psycho-sexual equality was not the desired result. Despite the acknowledged ambivalence of her position, for More, improvements to female education would encourage women to stay within their 'proper sphere', erasing all 'contentions for equality'.[7] The segregation of male and female education would encourage the development of sex-appropriate characteristics and roles. The thoughts expressed on education and the evidence of pedagogic practice amongst heterodox radicals such as Barbauld and Wollstonecraft, if at times equally complex, reveal a belief that emulation and the sharing of knowledge and experience between boys and girls and men and women, held the key to unlocking the true potential of the human mind and thus of society.

Marriage

It has been argued that critical reengagement with Aristophanes' tale of the androgynes presented heterodox radicals with the opportunity to challenge the authenticity of the biblical tale of Adam and Eve by highlighting its inconsistencies and by pointing to its heathen and mythical origins. For mental improvement to be achieved, the false inequities of the marital union with its unbreakable solemn vow and its enshrining of an unequal, hermaphroditical union of sexual opposites needed to be rejected. Heterodox radicals called for civil marriage to be introduced and for divorce for 'no-blame incompatibility' to be legalised. Rarely

[7] More, *Strictures*, pp.217-218.

mentioned in the historiography, the couple of isolated instances in which the vow of obedience was removed from the Unitarian matrimonial ceremony provide intriguing evidence of the support for the concept of psycho-sexual equality and its highly marginal and marginalising nature. What these examples illustrate is the degree to which heterodox radicals deviated not only from Anglicans but increasingly from conservative and conventionally-minded Rational Dissenters as well, for whom female obedience was not only enshrined in the Bible but was a necessary adjunct of naturally occurring yet critical sexual differences. By challenging the authority of the *pater familias* in the home, heterodox radicals were of course challenging the authority of the ruling elite and thus the patriarchal structure of society.

The Great Reform Act, 1832

This thesis thus helps to illustrate the degree to which the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny that underpinned heterodox radical ideas on equality and natural rights deviated significantly from beliefs held by the generality of English society. While always a marginal concept, initial evidence presented in the final chapter of this thesis might suggest that the 1832 Reform Act played an important role in undermining the credibility and potential of the heterodox interpretation of androgyny, while endorsing the more traditional biblical concept of androgyny enshrined in the story of creation in Genesis. The nature of the changes to the electorate and the rules of voting in 1832 – the explicit defining of the voter as male, middle-class and the owner of property, and the more implicit defining of that male, middle-class voter as independent, married and the father of children – would help to endorse the patriarchal and increasingly middle-class notion of the *pater familias* as one who held ultimate control of both private and public spheres. Subsequent reforms that emerged in the years immediately after 1832 would appear to have given this image further support. Amongst the increasingly politicised working-classes, any evidence of support for the

egalitarian notion of psycho-sexual equality amongst early Chartists, with their links to Owenite socialism, would seem to disappear as the battle for representation intensified. Studies of working-class politics and identity from this period onwards identify what Taylor so eloquently describes as the 'hardening line of sexual apartheid', notable across 'popular movements of the period'.[8] The significance of reform in and after 1832 is perhaps to be found in its impact upon the private and domestic sphere of the working and 'middling-class'. Initial and preliminary consideration of the 'Dissenting Marriage Question' would indicate that with the boon of 1828 and the introduction of Trinitarian and Unitarian middle-class men into the electorate after 1832 would help to drown out the voices of heterodox radicals in their midst. So too, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 would appear not only to have affected the private lives of working-class men and women, questioning their sexual morality, but to have introduced an effective obstacle to further radical debate on free love, divorce and contraception, ideas underpinned by the concept of psycho-sexual equality. Growing numbers of working-class women in particular believed that, along with the New Poor Law, the egalitarian practices promoted by heterodox radicals would make them more and not less vulnerable to male abuse and neglect. As Clark rightly observes, a newly reformed Parliament in which respectable middle-class men now had a voice succeeded in passing acts that served to endorse 'conventional morality' across society.[9] Evidence would appear to suggest that the Great Reform Act of 1832 and acts such as the New Poor Law and the Marriage Act passed in the years immediately afterwards, helped to achieve a quite remarkable consolidation of the doctrine of separate spheres across social, sexual and political spectrums. Of course, what this also serves to highlight is the fact that the heterodox interpretation of psychological androgyny was always a marginal concern and that few, radicals included, subscribed to the notion that the mind was unsexed.

[8] Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p.264.
[9] Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.195.

There is a sense that across society the appeal of sexual difference, enshrined in the fundamental tenets of Christianity, and, for some, endorsed by scientific evidence, was natural and normal. The Judeo-Christian notion of androgyny; the idea of creative or complementary and natural sexual opposites; central to figures such as Boehme and present in the ideas of political theorists such as Locke, Rousseau and Priestley, would appear to have succeeded. And although the Platonised concept did not disappear completely, continuing in the ideas of radicals such as Mill and later Woolf, it can be argued that it would take until the late twentieth century, this time with the sexual revolution of the 1970s, for the Platonised concept of psychological androgyny to emerge in earnest once again.

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